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ABSTRACT

This document contains 14 papers, written by Irish scholars, that consider educational history, sociology, philosophy, comparisons, curricula, and measurements. Six of the papers address various aspects of the history of education in Ireland. Lorcan Walsh analyzes the theme of nationalism in the Christian Brothers' textbooks, and Aine Hyland describes primary school curriculum changes during the past century. Patrick Callan addresses the transmission of Irish history in education, while Finbarr O'Driscoll explores women's struggles for equality in the Royal University. Archbishop Walsh and the Commission of Manual and Practical Instruction are discussed by Patrick O'Donovan, and Michael Quinlivan considers legislative aspects of compulsory student attendance. Robert Caul provides a sociological case study of union control of education in a Northern Ireland borough. Philosophical considerations of education for work are analyzed by M. C. Geraghty, while Michael O'Donovan examines post-primary education. Ian Wells describes pre-school education in Northern Ireland, and Denis Hainsworth explores Soviet educational theory. Three papers, written by Denis O'Boyle, Seamus McGuinness, and Kay MacKeogh, focus on examination and assessment issues. (JHP)

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IRISH EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

VOL 6 No. 2 1986-1987

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General Editor's Comment

Volume 6, Number 2 contains fourteen papers. Contributions fall roughly into the following categories: history of education, sociology, philosophy, comparative education, curriculum and examinations. They have been selected, not for their uniform quality, but rather as illustrating the separate and diverse lines of inquiry which have captured the energies of researchers in Ireland, North and South.

We begin with six papers addressing various aspects of the history of education in Ireland. Walsh opens with an analysis of nationalism in the textbooks of the Christian Brothers. Dr. Hyland follows with her discussion of curriculum change at primary level in the past century. Callan describes the transmission of Irish history in education. O'Driscoll explores the struggle of women for equality in the Royal University, while Patrick O'Donovan presents us with Archbishop Walsh and the Commission of Manual and Practical Instruction. Finally, Quinlivan deals with legislative aspects of compulsory attendance for pupils.

Caul provides a contemporary sociological case study of Unionist reproduction and control of education in a Northern Ireland borough.

Philosophical considerations of aspects of education for work and the notion of the school ethos are elucidated by Geraghty and O'Donovan respectively.

Nursery education in Northern Ireland is described by Wells, whilst Hainsworth examines the notion of educating the Soviet man.

Examinations and assessment issues are the focus of concern for O'Boyle, McGuinness and MacKeogh.

I am certain that the reader will find these papers stimulating. They are the fruit of great labour. We owe these writers an enormous intellectual debt.

Finally, as Editor, I wish to thank members of the Editorial Board for their assistance and our external referees for their views and helpful criticism. All of these individuals have contributed to bringing out Volume 6.

Jim McKernan
General Editor,
Education Department
University College Dublin.
February 1987

Irish Educational Studies, Vol.6, No. 2, 1986

NATIONALISM IN THE TEXTBOOKS OF THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

Lorcan Walsh

The Commissioners of National Education in Ireland published their own set of reading books in the 1930's. The central figure in their compilation was James Carlile. Carlile, a Scottish Presbyterian, was one of the seven commissioners of national education appointed in 1831.

The Nation described these books as "very useful" and respectable in their proper place ... but that place is not Ireland".[1] This view was reflected in evidence to the Powis Commission in 1869:

> You might have introduced them into a School in Canada or into a School in Africa, as appropriately as into a school in Ireland. 2

The verdict of Cardinal Cullen on the books of the National Board was even more harsh:

> The value of the books, notwithstanding this exclusion of Irishmen and selection of strangers, is very trifling; and many will agreed with me in saying that if all the books printed by the National Board were sent to the middle of the Atlantic and cast out into the ocean, Ireland and her literature would suffer no grear loss. 3

When one considers the popularity of the National Board books in England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand it is a further indication that they contained little content which could be termed specifically 'Irish'. In 1859 the Ballinasloe Union or Workhouse passed a motion noting the books' "total absence of historical information".[4] The Board did try to remedy the situation in the 1860's through its attempts to publish an Irish history book of its own. But these attempts never came to fruition.[5]

The reading books and history books of the Christian Brothers were, in contrast, welcomed from many sources for their attention to Irish history. The Nation noted about the Christian Brothers' books:

> Their classbooks consist of selections chiefly from native writers ... In the Third and Fourth Literary Class-Books the scholar is introduced to the orators, poets and essayists of his own country - to Curran, Grattan, Sheridan and Shiel - to Ossian, Moore, Goldsmith, Callanan, Griffin and Furlong - to Arthur O'Leary, Kirwan, Dr. England, Dr. Wiseman, and the modern pulpit orators 6

The Waterford Chronicle appreciated also the Irish sources for so much of the Brothers' reading books and commented that the Brothers' books would tend to "impress on their pupils ... a devotion to Ireland."[7]

A range of twentieth century comments also referred to the nationalist content of these books. According to Atkinson, writing about the Brothers' system of education in 1970, "much more revolutionary (than their religious instruction) was the way in which secular education was impregnated with nationalism".[8] One provincial newspaper noted in 1952:

> Complementary to, and insepable from devotion to the Irish language, is the spirit of Irish nationalism which has always pervaded the schools of the Christian Brothers everywhere. 9

F.X. Martin has written in his Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising:

> The leaders who emerged in 1916 and the subsequent years were largely past pupils of the Christian Brothers Schools ... Due recognition has not been given to the Irish Christian Brothers, for their part in the nationalist struggle, particularly for their unqualified support for the Gaelic revival. 10

The Freeman's Journal asserted in 1916:

> Down through the dark days of persecution these Brothers, with a price upon their heads, kept alive amongst the young the love of God and devotion to their country. 11

In a review in the Times Literary Supplement in 1981 Professor Denis Donoghue noted, as a former pupil of the Brothers, that the main tradition in the Christian Brothers schools in Newry was nationalist and therefore, suspicious of the Stormont government in Belfast.[12] It is noted in Mitchison's study, The Roots of Nationalism: Studies in Northern Europe, that the schools of the Christian Brothers played an important part in the growth of Irish nationalism and compares them to the "Folk High Schools" of Finland.[13]

This paper sets out to analyse the extent to which the content of the various textbooks of the Christian Brothers might have contributed to the growth of Irish nationalism. One history book which was found in a classroom of the Christian Brothers in 1825 was the controversial History Catechism by Sr. Ursula Young.[14] When one examines the book it comes as no surprise that the Commissioners of Education objected to its use in the classroom. One question and answer in the catechism went as follows:

> Q. What was the state of Ireland in the reign of Richard I?
>
> A. During this reign and for many succeeding ages it presented a melancholy picture of violence and anarchy; the invaders never ceasing to encroach upon the invaded... 15

About the United Irishmen it was asked in the same book:

> Did any occurrencies tend to goad them on to this treasonable act?

The reply was given as follows:

> Yes, the violent and unconstitutional outrages of the Orangemen, the unwarrantable and illegal excesses of a portion of the magistracy, and the half-hanging, tortures, floggings and

> burnings which, under the pretext of excessive loyalty, were permitted by the minister, and inflieted by his sycophants. 16

That such material might come into the hands of the native Irish children caused quite a stir among the Commissioners. Furthermore, it is worth noting that as early as 1825 there were doubts and fears expressed over the history taught by the Christian Brothers. These fears and doubts were to be expressed most strongly before the Powis Commission.[17]

The fact that the compilers of the Christian Brothers' textbooks were all Irish and had imbibed the values of Irish life ensured a different approach in their books than that adopted by the compilers of the National Board books. The attitude of the compilers of the National Board reading books was that Ireland was part of the Kingdom of Great Britian. In the Fourth Book of Lessons (1861) the Irish pupils were informed.

> The island of Great Britain, which is composed of England, Scotland and Wales, and the island of Ireland, form the British Empire in Europe. 18

The compilers of the National Board books in this view were merely reflecting the legal situation. For this they cannot be criticised. However, the lack of native Irish material in their books was regrettable. Lessons on industry, travel and natural history all neglected to make serious mention of Irish experiences in these areas. English characters were the subjects of the many biographical sketches in the books which were to serve as examples to the pupils. In contrast, the textbooks of the Christian Brothers were thoroughly Irish in content. Frequently, Irish writers and orators are used in their compilations, the most controversial being a section titled "Eloquence of the pulpit, Senate, Bar, etc.', which included pieces from the writings of Grattan, Sheridan and Bishop Doyle.[19] The poetry of Moore, Griffin, D.F. McCarthy and James

Clarence Mangan was included. Historical pieces by Archbishop McHale, Barrington and Dr. Miley meant that the books of the Christian Brothers were going to be very different in content from those of the National Board. It was the nationalism of Grattan and O'Connell which was related in the Brothers' books. Belief in O'Connell's constitutionalism was expressed:

> After the fatal catastrophe of 1798, Ireland cloven down, expiring under the feet of England, who crushed her without mercy, believed that henceforward she should renounce all hope of obtaining by arms the blessings, for the conquest of which she had so fatally revolted. [20]

What was needed, according to the Brothers' Literary Class Book (1846), was Ireland to become a nation "constitutionally insurgent ... resolved not to sit down again until justice has been done".[21]

O'Connell's success, readers were informed in an obvious reference to the Act of Union, was due "to that singular act of tyranny supported by law".[22] In another lesson of the Literary Class Book (1846) the surrender of the Irish chieftains to Strongbow was compared to the Act of Union:

> At a conference in 1170, her chieftains were told, nearly in the same words which disgraces her parliament in 1800, that there could be no remission of her internal feuds, no protection against future massacres, but by a voluntary sacrifice of that mischievous and agitation independence. [23]

The alleged similarities of both unions were drawn out:

> It is very remarkable, that though the occurencies were so different, the persons so dissimilar, and the periods so remote, the circumstances attending this first annexation of Ireland cannot be reflected on without the memory also recurring to the circumstances of the last. Though Cornwallis was not Strongbow, though Castlereagh was not MacMurrough, though

> the Peers were not Princes, and the Commons were not Kernes; and though nearly seven centuries had intervened between the accomplishment of these unions, it is impossible not to recognise in their features a strong family resemblance. 24

In the same book the alleged weaknesses or evils of British power were put forward. From a speech of Sheridan's on India it was stated that "it had been the friendship, generosity and kindness of the British nation which had laid waste the fertile fields of this once beautiful and opulent country". England was also charged with having torn and separated "the happy societies that once possessed those villages".[25] At the conclusion of the lesson came the moral, which must have been provocative in the Ireland of the nineteenth century:

> That resistance to power usurped is not merely a duty which he owes to himself and to his neighbour, but a duty which he owes to his God, in asserting and maintaining the rank which he gave him in creation. 26

The Christian Brothers' main reading book was also critical of British conduct in India and North America. The British empire in India, it was claimed, was "wrested in blood from the people to whom God and nature had given it".[27] The Americans, it was stated in a speech quoted from Lord Chatham, had been "driven to madness by injustice".[28] The moral right of British colonialism was questioned in the Brothers' Literary Class Book (1846):

> I counted twenty seven cases in this small book, where either the cruelty, the tyranny, the oppression of England in past times, and the sufferings of Ireland during all those times, is brought forward. 30

To the degree that nationalism is a movement of the fringe elements of society against the core, then it can be said that passages in the Brothers' books which were critical of British rule did reflect a nationalist position. Such passages helped to create the feeling that injustices had occurred, that Ireland had been wronged by Britain. Such a sense of grievance is one of the key ingredients of nationalist ideology.

The first full-blooded history book published by the Christian Brothers was their Historical Class-Book, first published in 1842. This comprised an abridgment of Fredet's Ancient and Modern History and shorter outlines of English and Irish history. In the section on Irish history events which later became central to Irish nationalist ideology, like the Norman invasion and the Reformation, are dealt with curtly, with little analysis. The facts, as the compiler saw them, are presented without any comment. There is just a passing reference to the rebellion of 1798 and the Act of Union was referred to as "judicial suicide".[31] This book ends with a brief treatment of Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association, a leader and a movement which succeeded because of their "just demands".[32]

Overall, one can say that in no way was the major history book of the Christian Brothers, Historical Class-Book, a significent piece of nationalist propaganda. Of the 642 pages in the book only 112 dealt with Irish history (22 pages less than that given over to English history). Furthermore, the content in the Irish history section was very factual and the language was elaborate and abstract. Neither the style nor content were anything which would be regarded as polemical or propagandist. The attitudes which emerge from the Historical Class-Book reveal a view of learning which is essentially passive and relies on the reception of abstract data.

Towards the end of the century changes took place in the books of both the National Board and the Christian Brothers. The Board's books went under a major revision in 1873. The most notable feature of the revision was the inclusion of lessons of specific Irish interest, e.g. 'Christian Antiquities of Ireland', 'The Lakes of Killarney'.[33] The most notable change in this regard in the Brothers' set of textbooks was the publication of Irish history books for pupils. These include the Outlines of Irish History (1885) and the Irish History Reader (1905). These publications were much more nationalistic than the publications already dealt with. In the preface to the 1905 publication the teachers are told that:

> They (the pupils) must be taught that Irishmen claiming the right to make their own laws, should never rest content until their native parliament is restored; and that Ireland looks to them, when grown to man's estate, to act the part of true men in furthering the sacred cause of nationhood. [34]

The treatment of specific incidents in Irish history reflected the growing nationalist interpretation of events. The Norman Invasion of 1169 was described as the most disastrous event in our history.[35] The principal culprit was Dermot Mac Murrough whose death in 1171 according to the compiler "was attended by manifest evidences of the Divine displeasure".[36] Surrender and Regrant was termed a "deadly outrage".[37] The 1798 Rebellion was dealt with at length in the 1905 publication, an incident which had been barely mentioned in previous historical passages.[38] The brutality of the English forces was emphasised whereas in the 1885 publication "the most flagrant excesses were committed by those deluded men who had joined the standard of rebellion".[39] The insurrection of Robert Emmet, never mentioned in a previous publication, was given prominent notice.[40] The

Great Famine was, according to the 1905 publication, the result of the "unnatural union with England".[41] In the conclusion of this publication readers are exhorted:

> As men, have a share in every movement that makes for the upraising and well-being of your country. Learn its language, cultivate its music, cherish its traditions, use its products and promote its manufactures. 42

This more explicit nationalistic tone was carried on in the reading books of the Christian Brothers published in the twentieth century. Celebration of figures who engaged in physical combat with forces of the Crown takes place. In a piece titled 'How they kept the Bridge at Athlone' the young readers are exhorted:

> When therefore young Irishmen read in Roman history of Moratius and his comrades ... let them remember that the authentic annals of Ireland record a scene of heroism not dissimilar in many of its features. 43

No less than five pages are given over to the exploits of Red Hugh O'Donnell in The Third Reader (1931). In The Senior Reader (1932) pupils are advised that the 'National Ideal' must be "shielded by every power and faculty ... even unto death".[44] The banner of freedom was, according to the author, the hallmark of every insurrention in Ireland:

> It was the flag of Davis, Tone and Pearse and it is the flag that Ireland will always stand by, if its nationality is to be vindicated. 45

The twentieth century publications of the Christian Brothers were significant in that they legitimised physical force nationalism. Now the acts of Henry Joy McCracken, Robert Emmet and Padraig Pearse were celebrated in the pages of school textbooks. These figures were put before the pupils as being the leaders of the Irish nation who fought the injustice of foreign domination. This view of Irish history was one which was prevalent in other contemporary history textbooks. In one history book John Boyle O'Reilly informed his young readers:

> The history of Ireland is the story of an endless fight of an ancient nation's brave struggle to keep its own from the hands of a powerful foreign invader filled with personal repacity and an ultimate political determination to make the island a compoent part of Great Britain. [46]

The history books published by Margaret Anna Cusack were no less forthright in laying the blame for Ireland's troubles at the door of England and Irish history was presented as an endless struggle against foreign domination.[47] The Kincora Readers, published by the Educational Company, contain passages of Irish history which eulogised the figures in Irish history who had engaged in armed rebellion against the forces of Great Britain.[48]

The use of history books in Irish schools was an issue which caused a lot of controversy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One M.P. asked the Chief Secretary in 1919 whether he was aware that "a part of the unrest in Ireland is due to seditious teaching carried on in schools which are under the control of the National Board".[49] Colonel Yate, another M.P., asked the Chief Secretary if he was aware of the type of history taught in Christian Brothers schools.[50] A special examination of history text-books used in Irish schools was carried out in 1919 after the Easter Rising. Some text-books were removed from the approved list by the Commissioners of National Education as they were deemed "calculated to create discontent and sedition". Mr. Dillon, an Irish Nationalist M.P., injected:

> Could there be any truthful textbook of Irish history without this tendency ..

> No history surveying the whole Irish situation which tells the true story of Ireland for the last 300 years, can produce anything other than anger. 51

These views allowed for, too great an emphasis on the role of the history text-book. The intrusion of Irish nationalist history into the history textbooks was only part of a much wider diffusion of nationalist ideas. Popular newspapers like The Freeman's Journal, popular ballads like those of Thomas Davis, mass meetings organised by Davitt and Parnell and organisations like the Gaelic League geared towards the practical working out of Irish nationalism, were much more important in developing national awareness and preparedness for action.

The greatest contribution of the textbooks of the Christian Brothers lay not in the development of political nationalism at all. Their history lessons which could be quite critical of England at times and could be seen as an incentive to action remained a small part of a series of textbooks which were famous for the sheer bulk of knowledge contained in them. Many of the historical notions in the Brothers' books would have necessitated an environment which was pervaded by nationalist ideas for them to have had any concrete impact. The history passages in the Brothers' books were not blueprints for action: at most they legitimised existing senses of grievance and anger.

It was in the field of cultural nationalism that the Brothers' books had their greatest impact. From the first publications in the 1840s it was not the overt nationalistic content of the books which was significant but rather the almost hidden fact that, in contrast to the reading books of the National Board, the books of the Christian Brothers were compiled by Irishmen who used Irish sources and who were themselves steeped in Irish history and literature. Consequently, from the very beginning a sense of Irishness pervades the Brothers' books. Lessons on the supposed origins of the Irish race, Irish customs, antiquities of Ireland and on Irish music made the pupils aware of a separate cultural identity. Lessons on the Irish language helped to increase the sense of linguistic separateness. Lessons on St. Patrick, St. Brigid and Fr. Matthew established religious differences while lessons on the Brehon laws implied a legal system distinct from the English system. The overall impact was the most important lesson of all: that there existed in ancient and contemporary times a set of relationships, a way of looking at and doing things different from an 'English' way of doing things. From the Brothers' books there emerged the view that there was in existence an Ireland with its own language, customs, laws, physical features and its own history. The books proclaimed that people had to fight to proclaim and maintain these distinctions. As Mitchison has pointed out, "an articulate nationalism will create its own grieveances".[52] The nationalism in the textbooks of the Christian Brothers did point to some alleged grievances, for example, the brutality during the rebellion of 1798, but these were mild compared to the allegations of writers like Pearse, Griffith and Cusack.

Overall, one can say that with the development of Irish nationalism in the later half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries the textbooks of the Christian Brothers reflected the growth in national consciousness. The allegation made in the Morning Post in 1920 "that the fires of treason and rebellion are fed from generation to generation in Irish elementary schools...."[53] was not true if one is to take the books of the Christian Brothers or the National Board into account. The link between content of a history book and practical action, which by definition nationalism is, is a tenuous one. The ideas in the Brothers' books did give basis for believing in an Irish-Ireland. However, Irish nationalism was a demand and actual fight for independence: in other countries nationalism remained simply a cultural expression. In Ireland there was sporadic fighting for independence (this may have been because only in Ireland was the strategic safety of the dominant power involved). Tom Garvin points out that even "the early Sinn Feiners were by no means a group of visionaries and, despite some crankishness, they did attempt to draft a coherent social and political programme".[54] The nationalism as expressed in the textbooks of the Christian Brothers was not an overt one. When one takes into account the seemingly prominent role of school teachers in the national movement in the early twentieth century the ideas in the textbooks might have served as fodder for a more militant nationalism in the classrooms. However, it was through putting before the minds of the young pupils of the existence of things Irish that the Christian Brothers' textbooks made their greatest contribution to the development of Irish nationalism. The textbooks were compiled for Irish pupils by Irishmen. Where concrete examples of abstract notions were needed Irish examples were adopted. Biographical sketches were invariably of Irish people. Pupils were left in no doubt as to the existence of things and people particularly Irish.[55]

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Irish Educational Studies, Vol.6, No. 2, 1986

THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN THE IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1868 to 1986

Aine Hyland

This paper will present an overview of curriculum change in the Irish national school system in the period from 1868 to 1986. It will highlight the process whereby the national school curriculum was reviewed and implemented at the following key points:

I	1868 - 1872	The report of the Powis Commission followed by the introduction of the Results Programme.
II	1898 - 1900	The report of the Belmore Commission followed by the introduction of the Revised Programme of 1900.
III	1922 - 1934	The reports of 1922 and 1926 National Programme Conferences and the Revised Programme of Primary Instruction, 1934.
IV	1947 - 1971	The INTO Plan for Education (1947) and the report of the Council of Education on the function and curriculum of the primary school (1954) followed eventually by the introduction of the Primary School Curriculum (1971).
V	1984 - 1986	The work of the Curriculum and Examinations Board in relation to the primary curriculum will be briefly summarised.

The paper will raise the following questions in relation to each of these key periods.

1. Why was a review thought necessary?
2. How was the review carried out?
3. Who was involved in the review?
4. What was the outcome of the review?
5. What arrangements were made for implementation?

1868 - 1872

1. Why? The impetus for an overall review of the national

school system in the 1860s came both from within the country and from the rest of the United Kingdom. A system of payment by results had been introduced in elementary schools in England in 1864. This new system, which had considerable curricular implications, had resulted in significant savings in public expenditure on education in England and the Treasury wanted to see it extended to Ireland.[1] Within Ireland there were pressures from the Catholic hierarchy to reform the national school system both in terms of curriculum (as set out in the Board school books) and in terms of denominational recognition.[2]

2. How? A Royal Commission was set up by the government in 1868 to carry out a full review of the system. Evidence, both written and oral, was given by organisations and individuals within the country and from overseas. All submissions and evidence were published and the reports and evidence covered nine volumes. The final report of the commission was published in 1870.[3]

3. Who? The Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Powis, consisted of 14 men - 7 Protestants and 7 Catholics. They included members of the aristocracy, of the judiciary and of the churches. The Commission also included two school inspectors.

4. What was the outcome? One of the most significant outcomes of the report was the introduction of a system of payment by results in Irish national schools which in turn resulted in a radical reform of the curriculum. Under the new system, teachers would be paid an annual salary and results fees which would be based on the results of their pupils at an annual examination. The new system and the related curriculum was drawn up by the Chief of Inspection, Patrick Keenan, who afterwards became Resident Commissioner

of National Education.[4] The system of payment by results resulted in an exam-dominated curriculum which was narrow, inflexible and centrally imposed.

5. Implementation. The Commissioners of National Education refused to introduce curriculum change until a commitment was made by the government to provide additional financing for Irish National Education.[5] Prime Minister Gladstone, who as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1860's had introduced economy measures in the public service generally, was not initially sympathetic to demands for an increase in the vote for Irish national education. However, in 1872, Resident Commissioner Keenan went to London[6] and following meetings with the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Treasury he eventually secured an increase of over 25 per cent in the annual vote for Irish national education.[7] This increase was used to pay the new results fees to schools. The teachers and inspectors co-operated fully with the Board in the implementation of the Results Programme and for over a quarter of a century the programme remained unchanged.

1898 - 1900

1. Why? During the 1890's, payment by results had been phased out in elementary schools in England and Scotland.[8] By the end of the nineteenth century, educational developments were taking place on two fronts in a number of countries of Western Europe, (1) the introduction of a more "child-centred" approach to education and (2) the inclusion of manual and practical instruction in the curriculum of elementary schools.[9] In Ireland, attention had been drawn to the need for curricular reform at a national school level on a number of occasions during the 1890's.[10]

2. How? In January 1897, the Lord Lieutenant set up a Vice-Regal Commission to inquire and report "on how far and

in what form manual and practical instruction might be introduced into the national school curriculum."[11] Like the Powis Commission of 1870, the Belmore Commission invited the views of individuals and organisations both in Ireland and overseas and all evidence, both oral and written was published.

3. Who? The Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Belmore, had 14 members, ten of whom were also members of the National Board. These members included the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Walsh (who was also a member of the Intermediate Board) and Professor Fitzgerald of Trinity College who was particularly interested in science in the curriculum. Due to the illness of the Earl of Belmore, Dr. Walsh played a leading role in the work of the Commission and in drafting the final report. Dr. Walsh also played a very significant part in the work of the Palles Commission which reviewed the system and the curriculum of intermediate education two years later.[12]

4. What was the outcome? A major revision of the national school curriculum took place as a result of the report of the Belmore Commission and the new curriculum, known as the Revised Programme of 1900 came into effect in all national schools in September 1900. With the introduction of the Revised Programme, payment by results was abolished. Philosophically and educationally, the Revised Programme was fundamentally differnt from the programme which it replaced. It was a "child-centred" curriculum and it encouraged learning based on activity and observation. The curriculum itself was drawn up almost exclusively by W.J.M. Starkie, who was appointed Resident Commissioner of National Education in February 1899 and who had no practical knowledge or experience of the national school system prior to his appointment. He refused help from the inspectorate in finalising the curriculum and there is no evidence that he

took account of the reservations of teachers, particularly those of the INTO, as expressed in their evidence to the Belmore Commission. No effort was made to "pilot" the programme before it was implemented in all national schools in the school year 1900-1901.[13]

5. Implementation. When the approval of the government was being sought for the new programme in 1899, it was estimated that the cost of introducing the new scheme would be at least £60,000 per annum. This represented about 4 per cent of the annual budget of about £1,400,000 on national education.[14] The Treasury made it clear from the start that they would not provide extra funds for Irish education and insisted that any additional costs would have to be offset by savings in other sub-heads of the national education vote.[15] This caused difficulties in the early years of the new century but as a result of some juggling within the vote (which caused some serious problems between the Board and the INTO) the Board "found" the funds to provide well-organised and well-staffed inservice courses for teachers and inspectors.[16] Over 20 new full-time organising inspectors and assistants were recruited on a five year contract basis to give courses in "new" subjects such as manual instruction, drawing, elementary science, singing and cookery. The Board also provided equipment grants averaging about £10,000 per annum during the first five years of the Revised Progamme. By 1904, expenditure which could be directly attributed to the Revised Programme, accounted for about 4 per cent of the annual budget.[17]

Overall, the success of the Revised Programme of 1900 was limited. It was a theoretically impressive curriculum but among its weaknesses were lack of consultation with teachers and inspectors at the drafting stage and failure to take account of the constraints, both physical and human, within the national school system of the period. There is evidence that many teachers and inspectors, possibly a majority, never fully understood the philosophy underlying the Revised Programme. In spite of wide-ranging in-service provision and equipment grants, the attitudes of many teachers and inspectors in the Revised Programme were ambivalent and it would appear that the Revised Programme was not implemented to the extent originally envisaged.[18]

1922 The First National Programme

Why? During the second decade of the twentieth century, cultural nationalism reached a peak of fervour in many European countries. In Ireland cultural and political developments in that decade resulted in questions being asked in nationalist circles about the relevance of the official curriculum of Irish national schools.[19] In 1918, the Gaelic League produced an Education Programme for all levels of education, in which considerable emphasis was given to Irish language and literature, history, music and culture generally.[20] At the annual congress of the INTO in 1920 criticisms were levelled against the official National School Programme on two grounds (1) that it was overloaded and (2) that the Irish language was placed in a subordinate position and was not classed as an obligatory subject. Congress directed that a conference be set up "to frame a programme or series of programmes in accordance with Irish ideals and conditions - due regard being given to local needs and views".[21]

Who? The conference, chaired by Maire Ni Chinneide was composed for 11 representatives from the following bodies: Aireacht an Oideachais, the General Council of County Councils, the National Labour Executive, the Gaelic League, the INTO and the ASTI.

How? There was no open invitation to members of the public to give evidence to the conference but the help and advice of some individuals were acknowledged. In particular, the conference acknowledged the help and support given by the Professor of Education in U.C.D., Rev. T. Corcoran, S.J., but his evidence was not published. Before issuing its programme, the conference submitted a draft copy to the Executive of the INTO, which in turn sent a deputation to the Minister for Education of the Provisional Dail pointing out "the apprehensions felt by the teachers as to the difficulties and hardships which the ideal character of the Programme might entail". The deputation was assured that the Minister believed "in fully consulting the teachers on all matters relative to educational administration ... and he is prepared to go as far to meet their representations and their views as is consistent with the interests and welfare of the nation as a whole".[22]

What was the outcome? The report of the First National Programme Conference was signed on 28 January 1922. In the following April the programme was provisionally adopted by the government and issued to the schools and it came into effect in all national schools from September of that year.

Implementation. The First National Programme of 1922 was radically different to the curriculum which it replaced. A number of subjects which had been compulsory since 1900, such as elementary science and drawing, were either removed from the curriculum or became optional. The Irish language was introduced as a compulsory subject to be taught in all classes for at least one hour per day, and in addition all the work in the infant classes was to be through the medium of Irish. Schools were also exhorted to carry out as much as possible of the work of the senior classes through Irish.

The First National Programme presented a major challenge for teachers. Out of a lay teaching force of 12,000 less than one-third were competent to teach Irish.[22] A major in-service programme was launched by the government during the summers of 1922 and 1923 and by 1924 this proportion had also doubled. The in-service programme cost £77,000 in 1922 and £65,000 in 1923.[24] This represented about 2 per cent of the annual budget for national education.

1926 Second National Programme

Why? Shortly after its introduction, teachers began to express unease about the 1922 programme. There was a general belief (confirmed by T.J. O'Connell of the INTO who had been secretary to the First National Programme Conference) that the 1922 Programme had been "framed rather to mark an ideal attainable only after lengthened and strenuous efforts on the part of educational authorities and educational bodies than to prescribe a scheme of work immediately applicable over the whole country".[25] Following their Easter Congress of 1924, the INTO wrote to the Minister for Education, indicating that they (the INTO) proposed to set up a conference to review the curriculum and asking him to suggest names for this conference.[26] The Minister's response was to take the initiative in setting up this conference which became known as the Second National Programme Conference.

Who? The Second National Programme Conference chaired by Rev. L. McKenna, S.J., had 24 members - three representatives of school managers, five representatives of the INTO - the President, the General Secretary and three members of the General Executive Committee; two representatives of the General Council of County Councils, two representatives of the Gaelic League and 11 nominees of the Minister for

Education. The A.S.T.I. wrote to the Minister asking for representation but this request was refused.[26]

How? The conference invited submissions by placing an advertisement in the public press. Replies were received from 54 public bodies and 150 individuals. In addition, oral evidence was given by 19 individuals.[27] None of the evidence was published, thereby bringing to an end a practice which had been well established during British administration. It was not until very recently, when the written evidence and some of the oral evidence has come to light, that it has been possible to compare the recommendations of the Conference with the views of those who submitted evidence. Such a comparison shows, for example, that the vast majority of those who gave evidence, including the INTO, expressed reservations about the feasibility or indeed the desirability of teaching infants entirely through the medium of Irish. Nevertheless, the conference unreservedly recommended that this requirement be continued, stating that "the members of the Conference agreed on the supreme importance of giving effect as far as possible to this principle; and in confirmation of their belief they received authoritative evidence".

What was the outcome? As a result of the conference, the programme was modified to take account of the difficulties which had been encountered by teachers in implementing the First National Programme. It was recognised that a more gradual approach both to the teaching of Irish and to teaching through the medium of Irish would have to be adopted. The requirements in other subjects were reduced to make more time available for Irish.

Implementation. The modifications were a "scaling down" of the requirements of the First National Programme and as such did not have either in-service or resource implications.

1934 Revised National Programme

Why? The new Fianna Fail government under De Valera, which had come to power in 1932, was anxious to press ahead with a policy of Gaelicisation. It was felt that the concessions which had been made in the national schools programme in 1926 should be withdrawn and that the more ideal approach contained in the 1922 programme should be re-introduced.

Who and Why? The decision to revise the curriculum was taken unilaterally by the Minister without consultation outside his Department.[29]

Implementation. Notes for Teachers were issued in the different subjects of the programme.[30] The Primary Certificate examination which had been introduced on an optional basis in 1929 became compulsory for all pupils in sixth class in 1943 and remained compulsory until 1967.[31] De Valera was unapologetic about the return to an exam oriented curriculum. In 1941 he stated: "I am less interested in the teacher's method of teaching than I am in the results he achieves, and the test I would apply would be the test of an examination".[32]

1971 The "New" Curriculum

Why? The 1934 Programme remained the official curriculum of the national school system until 1971. However, dissatisfaction with the programme had been expressed by the teachers from the early 1940s onwards. In 1947, the INTO published a *Plan for Education* which proposed a more child-centred approach to education and the inclusion of a wider range of subjects in the curriculum of the national school.[33] The same year, a departmental committee within the Department of Education also suggested that the curriculum be broadened.[34] In 1954, the Council of Education produced a report on the curriculum of the national school and this report also pointed out that the existing curriculum was too narrow.[35]

Who? In one sense, it can be suggested that those who initiated the review which culminated in the new curriculum of 1971 were the INTO (through the 1947 Plan of Education) and the Council of Education which published its review of the primary curriculum in 1954. It was not, however, until the mid-1960s that the Department of Education took steps to revise the curriculum. In December 1966 a Steering Committee was set up within the Department to advise on the primary education aspects of a proposed White Paper on Education. In Autumn 1967, the annual conference of primary inspectors debated the need for a new curriculum and before the end of the year a New Curriculum sub-committee had been appointed. The members of this sub-committee were all members of the primary education inspectorate.

How? In Spring 1968, some 200 schools (out of a total of 4,300) were chosen as pilot schools to pilot aspects of a revised curriculum and in October of that year a draft of a new curriculum[36] was submitted to a number of educational organisations (the INTO, managerial organisations at primary level and all colleges of education for primary teachers) which were invited in to the Department of Education to be briefed on developments. No post-primary interests were invited to this meeting nor were they subsequently given an opportunity to comment on the draft curriculum. There is no evidence that the ASTI requested an opportunity to make their views known - as they had done for instance at the setting up of the Second National Programme Conference in 1925.

The Working Document was published by the INTO in its journal, *An Muinteoir Naisiunta*, in February 1969.[37] However, there was no open invitation from the Department of Education to the public at large to respond to the Working Document. The Teachers' Study Group seems to have been the only group other than officially recognised bodies, which made a direct and detailed response to the Department. The responses to the Working Document were not published, thus continuing a trend which had started in 1922. Available responses would indicate that the overall thrust of the new curriculum was welcomed by the organisations consulted by the Department.[38]

Throughout 1970, work continued on the preparation of a Handbook for Teachers and in September 1971, this Handbook (in two volumes) was formally introduced into all national schools.[39] *The Primary School Curriculum* (1971) became the official curriculum of all national schools in September 1971.

Implementation. A total of about 400 schools had been involved in piloting the curriculum in the period 1968 to 1971. During the summers of 1969 - 1972 residential courses of a week's duration were organised for over 4,000 principals to familiarise them with the principles underlying the new curriculum and with the strategies for implementing it. Non-residential summer courses and weekend courses were organised for teachers at national, regional and local level and these courses continued until about 1974. The annual costs of these "special courses for teachers" grew from £30,000 in 1969 to over £80,000 in 1974.[40] The "Free Grant for School Requisites", i.e. a grant for school equipment, also increased significantly during this period from less than £55,000 to almost £425,000 per annum.[41] The combined additional expenditure on in-service and equipment which was directly related to the introduction of the "new" curriculum accounted for about 1 per cent of the annual budget for national education in 1974.

There is no doubt that impressive work was carried out by the primary inspectorate of the Department of Education in the years 1968 to 1972 in preparing the Working Document and the Guidelines for Teachers and in arranging for the piloting of courses and for in-service provision. This was done in a very short time and on a relatively limited budget.

Subsequent criticism focussed on some weaknesses in the procedures adopted. Some critics argued that the fact that different sub-committees of inspectors were responsible for different aspects of the curriculum resulted in a certain lack of cohesion in the Handbook. The failure to involve post-primary interests, either teachers, inspectors or management at any stage in the drafting or piloting of the curriculum resulted in a failure by many post-primary teachers to appreciate the extent of the intended reform. By the mid-1970s, many post-primary teachers were expressing concern at what they perceived as a falling in standards in primary schools.[42] The lack of consultation with post-primary inspectors was surprising, as many secondary school syllabuses had undergone significant reform during the 1960s and the authors of such reform might well have had something to contribute to the reform of the primary curriculum. The failure to involve, or at least engage in dialogue with, post-primary interests would have seem to have been particularly desirable as for the first time in the history of Irish education, elementary schools would no longer be required to provide terminal education for children. The Government had announced in 1966 that (1) free post-primary education would be available for all children (2) the primary certificate examination would be abolished (3) children should in general transfer from primary to post-primary school at the age of 12+ and (4) the compulsory period of education would be extended from 6-14 to 6-15 by the year 1972.[43] Consequently the need to ensure curriculum continuity between primary and post-primary education might have been regarded as particularly acute.

Although it was stated in the introduction to the 1971 Teachers' Handbook that the curriculum should be subject to ongoing review, this did not in fact happen. Evaluations of the different aspects of the curriculum were carried out by the Curriculum Unit of the Department of Education but until recently, the results of these evaluations were not publicly available. The dissemination in September 1985, of the reports on Irish and English were welcomed and it is hoped that reports on the other aspects will also be published.

There has been very little empirical research since 1971 to determine the extent to which the new curriculum has been implemented in practice in the schools. A review of large scale and smaller scale empirical research on aspects of the curriculum was carried out for the Curriculum and Examinations Board in 1985 and a summary of this research is contained in the Board's Discussion Paper on Primary Education.[44]

1984 - Curriculum and Examinations Board

Why? The Curriculum and Examinations Board which was set up in January 1984 was asked to "report to the Minister on the desirable aims, structure and content of curriculum at first and second levels".[45] As the specific terms of reference of the Interim Board concentrated on curriculum and assessment at post-primary level, most of the attention of the Interim Board was directed at this level. From the outset, however, the Board believed that the curriculum should be designed as a continuum, particularly during the period of compulsory schooling, and the structures which were set up reflected this approach.

Who? The Interim Board chaired by Dr. E. Walsh, is composed of 20 individuals, nominated by the Minister for Education, from a wide range of educational and other interests.

How? The Board adopted a system of setting up subcommittees to advise on various aspects of its brief and of publishing short Consultative Documents and Discussion Papers for wide dissemination. The committee which advised on a curricular framework for junior cycle post-primary included teachers and management personnel from the primary sector. Similarly, the Primary Review Committee included teachers and others from the post-primary sector. As well as inviting written responses to these documents, the Board accepted oral evidence from major organisations (the Designated Bodies) and organised public meetings at venues throughout the country where wide-ranging discussion on the Board's documents took place. The Board proposes to publish a number of these responses within the coming months. These responses will be taken into account by the Board before making any firm recommendations to the Minister on curriculum and assessment.

Outcome. The interim Board is coming to the end of its term of office. It is expected that legislation to set up a Statutory Board will be put before the Houses of the Oireachtais shortly. The Interim Board plans to report to the Minister for Education in April 1986 and the report will be published simultaneously with its presentation to the Minister. As regards primary education, the Board has recommended that an overall review of the primary curriculum be undertaken and the Primary Committee which is sitting at present has been asked to advise the Board as to the form such a review might take.

Summary and Conclusions

A number of tentative conclusions might be drawn from the above overview of curriculum review and change during the past 120 years.

The reasons for carrying out a review of the primary curriculum varied at different periods but in all cases in which a review was followed by reform, the formal decision to carry out a review was taken at government level.

The composition of the review bodies varied at different periods. Some of the bodies were composed of individuals directly nominated by the Crown such as in the case of the Powis or Belmore Commissions or the Council of Education which was set up in 1950. Others contained a balance of representatives of various interest groups and individual Ministerial nominees as in the case of the Second National Programme Conference. Under British administration, teachers were not represented *per se* on review bodies although their views on the curriculum were sought and published. Review bodies set up from 1922 onwards, invariably included teachers among their membership, either in a formal capacity representing the INTO or as individuals who were closely involved with and would know the views of the INTO.

All the reviews involved an element of consultation with interest groups but the extent of such consultation varied considerably. The open and frank approach which characterised curricular review in the days of British administration had much to commend it from the point of view of an educational historian. This approach was unfortunately discontinued under the Free State government. There is evidence that the Second National Programme Conference had intended to publish the submissions it received but this intention was frustrated by the refusal of the Department of Finance to provide the necessary funds for such publication.[46] Subsequent review bodies seem to have made no attempt to publish submissions - consequently it is difficult to determine what individuals or organisations were most influential in determining the outcome. The intention of the Curriculum and Examinations Board to reverse this trend and to publish submissions from designated bodies is a welcome one.

The drafting of the new programmes was carried out in most cases by individuals or committees within the National Board or within the Department of Education. Both the Results Programme of the 1870s and the Revised Programme of 1900 were drafted by the then Resident Commissioners, Keenan and Starkie respectively. The National Programmes of 1922 and 1926 were drafted by the First and Second National Programme Conferences and were taken on board and promulgated by the Department of Education. The 1934 programmes and the 1971 curriculum were both drafted within the Department of Education. There is no evidence to suggest one way or the other as to which approach led to more successful implementation.

Implementation: An analysis of curriculum review and renewal over the past 120 years indicates that curriculum reform costs money. On each of the four occasions when major curricular change occurred, there was government commitment to additional financing for this purpose. The most outstanding example was in 1872 when the government allocated an extra 25 per cent to the national education budget to enable payment by results to be introduced. In later reforms, additional funds were allocated to two areas - in-service and equipment. In 1900 and 1922, the additional funding was in the region of 4 per cent and 2 per cent respectively of the overall national education budget. In 1971, additional funding was about 1 per cent of the budget. In any future reform, money would have to be found for in-service, and where appropriate, for materials and equipment.

While additonal funds would appear to be a necessary condition for curricular renewal, it is not a sufficient condition. The above analysis would suggest that the goodwill and support of teachers and inspectors is also essential if curricular reform is to succeed. Communication and consultation contribute significantly to the developement of such goodwill and support and the evidence would indicate that time and effort spent on communication and consultation is time well spent.

Finally, a quotation from Dr. Coolahan's recent book, The ASTI and Post-Primary Education, 1909 - 1984, supports the conclusions arrived at in this paper. Having analysed in considerable detail, events related to post-primary curricular reform in the period from 1970 to 1985, Dr. Coolahan concluded:

> The lessons of the last 15 years indicate that unless the support and co-operation of the teacher unions are obtained there is little prospect of significant curricular or examination reform. Such reforms require significant expenditure. The teacher unions

> will be involved in balancing professional concern about the educational acceptability of the proposed changes with what they regard as appropriate reward for their members.[47]

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EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A FORGOTTEN ASPECT OF THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Finbarr O'Driscoll

The founding of the Royal University, while giving students of all denominations from all parts of Ireland a chance to present themselves for the same examinations and compete for valuable exhibitions and prizes, nevertheless had its drawbacks. It was purely an examining body and not a teaching university and "was not likely to inspire its graduates with feelings either of affection or loyalty."[1] Neither was it residential. While it could be said that a great number of its graduates passed its examinations without attending any of its colleges or going through any of its courses of study, nevertheless, its Fellows, who were also its examiners did lecture. This, at least, would partly refute the allegation that it was just an examining body. The examination system with all its weaknesses provided many students, male and female, with an opportunity of acquiring degrees, even though circumstances prevented the female students from attending the Fellows' lectures.

These Fellows were appointed by the Senate as a result of an amendment to the University Education (Ireland) Act which had become law in August 1879. Thirteen of the twenty-six appointees were assigned to the Catholic University in St. Stephen's Green, which had just been put in the charge of the Jesuits and was already being referred to as University College. The reaminder were assigned to the Queen's Colleges. Both sets of lecturers received the same salary. Those belonging to University College received £400 per annum in salary and this was regarded as a form of indirect endowment. Their counterparts even though performing similar duties received as much as brought their salary up to £400 per annum. They all lectured in the colleges to which they were attached and met three times a year in Dublin to set papers for the forthcoming examinations, settle the distribution of work and sometimes alter courses. Patrick Semple, M.A., Junior R.U.I., in an article on the Royal University, classified its most serious faults as belonging to the area of administation. He stated:

> The ruling body was the Senate, all of whose members were nominated by the Government. So too were the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor; and the Fellows appointed by the Senate and deriving their authority from it, were thus indirectly government nominees. No working or teaching Fellow or Examiner could be a member of the Senate. This was a fault common to all educational boards set up in this country by the British Government ... Seemingly an official mind was convinced that such persons would be biased and prejudiced in their own favour or in favour of their friends. 2

Its Chancellor hoped that in time it would be rendered suitable "for the purposes of a great National University."[3]

All the while the women's grievance with the governing body was festering, culminating in the production of a phamphlet in 1888 by Margaret Tierney Downes. This outlined in detail the grievances of the Catholic female students of the Royal University. Despite great performances in the examinations they were of the opinion, that though competing with the men on equal terms, they had not the same advantages as their counterparts, as a consequence of being debarred from attending the Fellows' lectures. Her thesis was as follows:

> That not merely are the previously existing educational disabilities of women suffered by the authorities of the Royal University to remain unredressed,but a new inequality has,

> for the first time, been created to their prejudice. The Senate has, in carrying out the objects of the Univeristy, expressly provided for the education of the Catholic male students, but it has made no provision whatsoever for the instruction of Catholic Lady Students. 4

It had been within the Senate's power to insist that the educational advantages of the university be open to all without a sex disqualifiction. It was not entitled to order the lecture rooms of all existing colleges to be thrown open, on equal terms, to the students of both sexes. Such a decision could only be made by the ruling bodies of the colleges concerned. The Fellows, in Miss Tierney Downes' opinion, "belong to the University,"[5] irrespective of their place of residence and were left "to the mercy of the colleges with which they happen to be connected."[6] They were powerless to initiate reform to correct the situation. The end result was in fact an exclusive deal for the male students of the university.

In 1883 the women of the Royal University had sent a memorial to the governing body seeking to be taught by the Fellows attached to University College. In the first instance they had requested the college to admit them, and this having failed applied directly to the Royal for teaching by the Fellows. The memorial drafted in the main by Miss Mulvany, headmistress of Alexandra School, who was then studying for her degree, and Miss McCutcheon, head of Rutland School, which was in the main Presbyterian, was signed by every female student of the university. The university's response was a statement to the effect that it could not compel the Fellows to lecture anywhere except in University College. However, should the women's group request the Fellows to lecture to them and the latter indicate a willingness to undertake the venture, then the university authorities would immediately provide a room in the building to enable them to get that teaching.

For a while some of the Fellows did come and teach but repetition of lectures became a source of irritation to them. In time the venture fell through. Fr. Finlay, S.J., was one of the Fellows who lectured to the women students. His subject area was Philosophy. He had always been a staunch believer in the higher education of women. Fathers O'Neill and Darlington of the same Society also helped out both in the Royal and in the women's colleges - St. Mary's University College run by the Dominicans and Loreto College, Stephen's Green. Nevertheless, the fact that the Senate had not provided for the delivery of the Fellows' lectures anywhere else in Dublin except at University College, Stephen's Green, was deemed to be a grave oversight in the view of Miss Tierney Downes. She also remained convinced that the governing body was not disposed towards remedying the defect.

An example is quoted whereby a lady student applied to attend the Fellows' lectures given in the aforementioned college to be told that the lectures were reserved for the male students only. The committee of Catholic lady students sought to rectify matters and drafted a memorial to this effect to the Senate, while at the same time seeking the support of the annual committee of Convocation. This they duly received. The Freeman's Journal was accused of giving a "bald and garbled report"[7] on this legislative assembly's support for the women's case. The champions of their cause appear to have been the Irish Times and the Cork press with the Freeman's Journal offering "but lukewarm support."[8]

At Convocation insult was added to injury, it would appear, when Dr. William Delany, S.J., declared that no one was barred from lectures at University College on account of their religious beliefs. This was seen as sidestepping the women's case which declared that they were barred on account of a sex disqualification. The Senate's response was swift and to the point. The female students were not in a position to interfere with the internal arrangements of the colleges affiliated to the Royal university. Of this the women's group were already aware. They simply wanted the Senate

> ... to exercise the powers they unquestionably do possess of calling on the Catholic Fellows to deliver lectures in some place where admission would be as free to us as to our male competitors. With this demand, the Senate has not dealt, and this was the only demand addressed to them. 9

Efforts in this area having been unsuccessful the Catholic women students now appealed to the public to support their case for equal opportunity with they fellow students. The point was made that Alexandra should have led the way in terms of this great endeavour as it had a legacy of quality results behind it in the university examinations. The academic distinctions achieved by Catholic students up to that point were poverty-stricken to the extent that they gave rise to the belief that there was a deficiency of intellectuals among that group of students.

Even though the Royal University had made available its degrees to women, its facilities for lectures were not so readily available. Some of its sutdents (principally from Alexandra College) had applied in 1883 to Fr. Delany, requesting permission to attend lectures there. This request was turned down on the grounds that he did not have enough space in the classrooms for his own students. Even though it would appear that Fr. Delany was against allowing women to attend such lectures within University College, either separately or in conjunction with the male students, out of a personal conviction, it may well be that his hands were tied "given the customs and canon law of the time."[10] However, the classrooms in this building were placed in various parts of a house which was simultaenously a house of residence for the community and the intern students. Either way Fr. Delany was in control. In 1885 and 1888 the Senate had again informed the lady students that they could not be facilitated. The latter group refused to accept these replies and continued to do battle. Eventually the pressure told and in 1902 Fr. Delaney was persuaded by the college council to allow second and third year honours women students to attend Fellows' lectures in the Aula Max. This, however, did not resolve the issue in its entirety. First arts students were not catered for in the provision. Attacks on Fr. Delany's domination of the Fellows' lectures by University College students who supported the women's viewpoint became prevalent. The chief protagonist was Francis Skeffington who conducted much agitation on their behalf and eventually resigned the registrarship of the Royal University in protest. He added weight to the women's campaign, being organised in the main by his future wife Hanna Sheehy and Agnes O'Farrelly, both past pupils of St. Mary's University College, Alice Oldham of Alexandra College and Mary Hayden who had connections with both the aforementioned colleges. These people were under no illusion as to the struggle in hand as evidenced in an article by Alice Oldham in The New Ireland Review of January 1897. She outlined the existence of "a widespread objection in this country to mixed classes, to men and women studying together at college lectures."[11]

The Board of Trinity College in a statement published by them in 1895 made use of this objection to teaching mixed classes as a reason for not admitting women students to the college. Alice Oldham was convinced that even if a Roman Catholic Teaching University was established the authorities would not sanction the attendance of women. Dr. Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, like Fr. Delaney, was very conservative in his views and disapproved of mixed education. With the way forward apparently blocked the women's movement now proposed the endowment of women's colleges as the only alternative to co-education (i.e. men and women attending the same lectures). Inherent in the suggestion of endowment was the case for female junior fellowship holders to be appointed as Senior Fellows.

It was understood that appointments as Senior Fellows would be made from amongst the ranks of Junior Fellows. Several women had proved their ability by obtaining junior fellowships in competition with their male counterparts. To counteract the lack of Fellows' lectures available in the women's colleges, the Central Association of Irish Schoolmistresses (CAISM) recommended to the standing committee of the Royal University of Ireland in 1899,[12] that "the women Junior Fellows shall be appointed Senior Fellows with the duty of lecturing in Alexandra College and St. Mary's College."[13] Women Junior Fellows held posts in History and Modern Literature and it was felt that their services as Senior Fellows was badly required by the female students of the Royal University. Up to this point no such appointments of women to the post had been made.

Mary Hayden, one of the first women to obtain a Junior Fellowship, challenged this arrangement without success on a number of occasions. When her Junior fellowship expired in 1900 she petitioned for the post of Senior Fellow. It was turned down on a sex disqualification. She had discharged her duties as an examiner in a very reliable manner from 1895 to 1899. The decison rested with Dr. Delaney, President of the College and in Mary Hayden's own words, "he won't have a woman."[14] From the time she had obtained the junior fellowship four vacancies had arisen on the Board to which she belonged, namely, the English Board. One post was given to a Mr. Trench, and the other to Fr. O'Neill who was placed just behind her in the junior fellowship examinations. She also petitioned the other two vacancies but was told by Fr. Delaney that by statute, women were not eligible for the post of Senior Fellow. She then questioned the decision requesting to know which statute prevented her from obtaining the post. To this she got no reply. Having got legal advice from a member of the standing committee she discovered that there was no legal disability preventing her from being granted the post. The same individual who gave her this advice also informed her that he did not support the election of women to that office. The matter was then closed.

With the passage of time, however, public opinion had begun to sway towards the women's group. The continual lobbying was finally paying dividends. In 1896 the women's colleges in a memorial drafted and presented to the Chief Secretary made thier case for endowment of their colleges. The movement is credited to "Catholic educationists"[15] . namely, the Dominican, Loreto and Ursuline Orders. In paying this tribute Alice Oldham did not mention that the memorial had been drafted in Alexandra College. This was most likely a ploy, as both Miss Oldham and the Alexandra Committee were "very desirous of having the signatures of some Catholic bishops" along with those of "the Chief Baron, and of all influential Catholics."[16] It worked. Among the signatures one finds the names of Gerald Molloy, D.D., Rector of the Catholic University, Robert T. Carberry, S.J., President of University College, Gerald Fitzgibbon, Lord Justice of Appeal, P.C., Thomas Grattan and Charles Gavan Duffy to name but a few. Significantly enough, Archbishop Walsh's signature is not to be found on the list. The

Protestant Archbishops and Bishops and "eminent churchmen among Catholics and Presbyterians,"[17] along with doctors, lawyers, important officials of public institutions, judges and most of the Senate and Fellows of the two Universities signed the memorial.

There the case rested, however, until the turn of the century when a commission was established to study the functioning of the Royal University. It was appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Robertson to conduct an inquiry

> ... into the present condition of the higher general, and technical education available in Ireland outside Trinity College, Dublin and to report as to what reforms if any, are desirable in order to render that education adequate to the needs of the Irish people. 18

The outcome according to Balfour was the publication of three volumes of very contradictory evidence with the total report being signed by eleven of the twelve commissioners. Reservations were submitted by six commissioners. On the question of women's higher education the outcome did not appear to be so gloomy. The evidence presented on their behalf was highly co-ordinated, even though a fundamental difference of opinion existed between the various represented groups.

Mother Patrick Sheil who supervised the evidence presented on behalf of the Dominican nuns should have had a vested interest in maintaining St. Mary's University College as a separate women's college. However, she confounded everyone by declaring, through Mary Hayden, that the solution lay in the establishment of a new university or university college for Catholics here in Ireland with men and women obtaining degrees under the same conditions. This was very much in line with the evidence presented by the CAISM and the Irish Association of Women Graduates (IAWG). In a circular sent to graduates prior to the Commission taking evidence the former group offered two possibilities. One, that at least two of the existing colleges, one for Catholics, one for Protestants, be endowed as teaching colleges affiliated to the university where the women would be excluded from the colleges attended by the the men, i.e., the Fellows' lectures, the laboratories, libraries and professional schools. The second recommended that at least two of the women's colleges, one Catholic, one Protestant, be given endowments to supply residential halls for women students which would in time supply tutorial teaching in addition to the Fellows' lectures. Further to this, all the Fellows' lectures in the general affiliated collegss attended by men would be open to women, with the practical laboratory teaching that they might require and the professional schools.

These two schemes for teaching women were put forward irrespective of which scheme for Irish university education was chosen by the graduates. The second possibility had 244 in favour with 8 against and 48 unanswered. The term "unanswered" meant that those replying offered other solutions. In effect what the women wanted was co-education. On the question of the Fellows' lectures, Alice Oldham, while presenting evidence on behalf of the CAISM stated that

> ... what we desire is, to have the best teaching, and we could not get this teaching unless the principal courses of lectures, to which the Fellows give their best attention, were not open to women. 19

In other words, no repeats. Both the CAISM and IAWG wanted attendance at recognised lectures to be a necessary preliminary to graduation. Recognised lectures were defined as those given by the Fellows and professors in the general colleges only, and not those delivered in the colleges exclusively for women. If this attendance at such lectures was not made compulsory it was suggested that there should be two different kinds of degrees, one for intern students, the other for externs. The purpose of this suggestion was to raise the quality of Irish degrees and eliminate the idea of private study. Agnes O'Farrelly while giving evidence on behalf of the IAWG stated that in the interests of the majority, a few should be sacrificed, because it would raise the whole value of the education and of the degrees.[20] This proposal, however, did not have the backing of the graduates circularised. 156 favoured externs gaining degrees while 91 favoured interns only receiving them. Only 32 felt that externs should receive a lower status degree. One presumes that many of these graduates appreciated the value and rewards of private study. But what of the women's colleges? What future lay in store for them? The IAWG and the CAISM supported the idea of converting them to halls of residence where the students could enjoy full collegiate life, i.e., attend the Senior Fellows' lectures with the men, and have the use of residence set aside for tutorial work. It was suggested that any endowments likely to be bestowed should go towards equipping the existing colleges rather than new buildings.

Mary Hayden, when writing to Mother Patrick almost nine years after the Robertson Commission had completed its work, still remembered what the latter had to say about the use of the womens' colleges. It read:

> You will remember that when I gave evidence in your name before the University Commission my evidence, prepared under your direction and submitted to you (I mean the then Superior, and yourself) ... asked that the existing women's colleges should be made into hostels for poorer students. I admired at the time your unselfish and public-spirited action... [21]

This view of Mother Patrick's coincided with the final deliberations of the Robertson Commission. It was their considered opinion that

> ... women and men should attend the same lectures and pass examinations in the same Colleges and obtain degrees on the same conditions ... the existing women's colleges might easily be converted into residence halls in connection with the University of Dublin or within the constituent college in Dublin and Belfast under the reorganized Royal University. 22

The idea of a Catholic university as a solution was rejected. Whereas the commissioners' views differed as to the solution of the university question, they were of one mind on the question of womens' education. While pre-empting the likely outcome of the commission and at the same time acknowledging womens' rights to a quality filled higher education, the Dominican nuns undertook a detailed study of the American experience of co-education at university level and also that of Great Britain. The material in question had been obtained in the main through the auspices of the CAISM and its secretary Alice Oldham. Mary Hayden referred to a statement made by Mr. Harris, the United States Minister of Education in reply to a letter addressed to him by Alice Oldham. He informed the CAISM that

> I have had all the material bearing on the subject investigated both from printed reports and from an extensive correspondence with the superintendent of the school systems and the Presidents of Colleges and Universities, is entirely favourable to the policy of co-education in your schools and higher institutions. 23

The Moseley Commission on American Education, 1902 supported this concept even though a minority report disapproved. Eighteen professors of Cambridge supported the concept as early as 1892 when asked for their opinions on the matter by the CAISM. It was their considered opinion that the presence of women in the classes was both advantageous and an aid for discipline. This view was upheld by Dr. W.T. Harris of St. Louis who also suggested it on the grounds of it being economically sensible and the likelihood of producing better balanced intellectual development for both sexes. Dr. Jordan, President of Leland Stanford University, deemed it to be "of great advantage to both men and women to meet on a plane of equality in education."[24] Dr. Bernard, President of Columbia University, a great advocate of co-education, impressed the following upon the Irish women graduates. In the first instance the standard of teaching and examination would be the same for all. Secondly, the economic factor of having only one set of teachers had to be considered. Thirdly, he envisaged the stimulation of a healthy rivalry in learning between the sexes leading to similar opportunities opening up to both groups in later life. He acknowledged, however, that there were physiological differences in organisation and bodily strength wherein some women would benefit only from separate instruction along the lines of Girton, Newnham and the Oxford Halls. While supporting the case for co-education Dr. Bernard did warn of the possible dangers arising from an unhealthy rivalry developing between the sexes. In such a situation he foresaw one side or the other having to be seen to dominate. Lest such should occur he proposed that there be colleges exclusively for men, some exclusively for women, others mixed and open to both and others again open indiscriminately to all. This, he believed,was necessary because the differences which existed in a country's social strata necessitated differences in that country's methods and materials. Such a suggestion appears more appropriate to a country the size of the United States. Economic factors alone would render this solution inappropriate. The working out of the finer details was not of primary concern to the women's lobby once the principle of co-education was itself approved. Having obtained substantial support from both America and Britain greatly enhanced their evidence given before the Commission. The Commission's acknowledgement of women's rights and its proposal for resolving the situation gave rise to a sense of moral victory and new found hope. Victory for the there and then and hope for the future. With the completion of the Commission's work came a sense of finality with the women's problems unresolved as yet. The impetus appears to have been lost momentarily with matters lying dormant for almost six years. Finally in 1908 the Bill was enacted. Once again, however, the question of co-education raised its head in the form of Fr. Delany. In a letter to Archbishop Walsh dated 8 April 1908, after the National University Bill had been introduced and a solution to the university question obtained he recommended caution before any commital to co-education. In his evidence to the Robertson Commission he quoted the one source from the American experience that disapproved of co-education. He stated that they were already having "grave doubts about the wisdom of maintaining it."[25] He remained unconvinced that it was in

> ... the interests of the educational formation of either the men or women students that there should be such co-education. Our experience here goes to show (what has been noted in Chicago) that the work of a co-educative system tends to diminish refinement amongst the women students and to lessen markedly in the men students the love of courtesy and consideration for women. Of course there are other and nearer considerations into which I need not enter. 26

The latter statement no doubt refers to moral issues and the dangers he felt were imposed upon both sexes by having them in attendance at the same lectures. Fr. Delany's attitude was a sign of the times. His evidence portrayed "the protective attitude of a celibate clergy towards the laity."[27] But progressive attitudes ruled the day. The principle of co-education had been conceded to the women's group. Its fulfilment was fairly close at hand. The year 1909 saw University College Dublin as the Dublin Constituent College of the National University open all doors to women equally with men. With the death of the Royal University came a new era in women's higher education.

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ASPECTS OF THE TRANSMISSION OF HISTORY IN IRELAND DURING THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Patrick Callan

A transformation took place in Irish life and thought in the twenty years after 1891. The mythologising of Charles Stewart Parnell was part of that change. According to F.S.L. Lyons, a different nationalism developed which "looked backward with nostalgia to an ancient Irish civilisation with its own language literature and history".[1] This nationalist vision of the past coincided with the Gaelic League's stress on the importance of de-anglicisation and the possible cultural uniqueness of the Gael.

The imaginative reconstruction of an idealised Irish community before the 'strangers' arrived received popular expression in the writings of Patrick Weston Joyce, especially in his Social History of Ancient Ireland (1903). An admirer praised this book for presenting in "clear detail what the Irish race is able to accomplish when free to exert its power in free and untrammelled vigour".[2] Conversely, the Protestant-unionist interpretation of Irish history was rooted in the acceptance of the English connection as the logical government for Ireland. Some were scornful in denying that Ireland had ever been a separate or historic nation, denying the very basis of Irish nationalism.[3]

Two such dissimilar perceptions of the past made history relevant and important in the contemporary context. According to the Irish Teachers' Journal in 1901, "around many events and incidents of our history fierce conflicts have been raged, which ... cannot be considered as ended".[4]

This article will touch on aspects of the transmission of history in the national school, and in society at large, during the latter years of the nineteenth century. Given the controversial profile of the subject, it was not surprising that the Commissioners for National Education in Ireland (CNEI) excluded it from the classroom as a specific entity, while allowing it to be subsumed by or partially integrated with other subjects, such as geography or English. It was a limbo topic, and critics of the minimal provision for history as a curricular study generally ignored this elemental level of subsistence.

From its earliest years, the CNEI exercised the most complete control over the texts to be used in the classroom, whether in separate religious or combined secular education. It stood *in loco parentis*, and exercised a strict control over teacher and school. While the CNEI administered the school system within definite pragmatic parameters, its textbooks appear to have been held in high esteem in Britain, parts of Europe and Australia. An Anglican ministering in England, insisted that hundreds of English schools, as well as the 'best authorities on education', welcomed the 'unobjectionable character' and the excellence of the books supplied by the Board for every branch of secular education. The justification for its work in this area was succinctly stated in 1853, as a preface to abstracts of material published by the CNEI: the main intention was to supply

> the National Schools in Ireland, and the public generally, with works in harmony with an improved system of education; cheap in price and superior in executions; moral and religious in their character, without being sectarian; and, therefore, peculiarly adapted to the purposes of united instruction and acceptable to all classes and religious denomination.

Cardinal Paul Cullen quoted this in his evidence to the

Powis Commission on primary education, commenting that they might be religious, but they were not Catholic.[5] The CNEI emphasised the role of moral education in improving the social condition of students, thus operating in the mainstream of Victorian philanthropy.

The inspectorate vetted all material submitted for approved use, and eliminated those history books which had been used in the schools inherited by the CNEI. The excisions were not limited to history only: the Poetic Selections published in 1869 featured extracts from 26 Shakespearean plays. The preface acknowledged that the plays were cheaply available elsewhere, but indicated that the CNEI did not think that "their cheapness (was) ... a sufficient reason to place such works in the hands of youth without careful expurgation".[6] This principle was generously applied to history, and historical references were culled from a wide range of literature.

The CNEI showed an inconsistency in its treatment of history. In 1852, it sanctioned Pinnock's Cathecism of the Histories of Greece, Rome, England and France, but consistently refused approval for any of his texts after that time. P.W. Joyce's History of England was not considered to need approval in 1884, but it was vetoed in 1887. The 'approval not required' label was also given to W.A. O'Connor's History of the Irish People in 1886, but subsequently, there was no indication that it was used.[7]

Occasionally, the CNEI showed a willingness to consider a broad treatment of Irish history. The design of a Manual of Geography and History, by Dr. G.W. Abraham, was approved 'in general terms' in 1866, but the work was not completed. The Commissioners seemed willing to allow antiquarian study from the Irish past, and sanctioned P.W. Joyce's Origins of Irish Names of Places, and his Irish Local Names Explained in 1871. Sir T.N. Redington - resident Catholic Commissioner on education - acknowledged, in response to strong criticism, at a commission of inquiry into primary education in 1854 that the 'denial' of history in its schools mainly concerned 'modern history'.[8]

The treatment of Irish history incited accusations that the CNEI were systematically trying to repress the culture of the native Irish. Thomas Davis epitomised the theme, at once indignant and sarcastic, that dominated the nationalist critique of the national school system. Davis queried the justification for a primary school system which taught the children "no more of their state and history of Ireland than of Belgium and Japan". A Christian Brother complained that the national schools were bereft of every sentiment that could inform the Irish Catholic either as to his faith or his fatherland. R. Barry O'Brien, a severe critic of non-denominational education in the first volume of Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland, 1831-1881 (1883), considered that the saga of national education represented one of the "most disgraceful chapters ... of English domination in Ireland", history being one of the black spots.[9]

The extensive examination by Ellen McHugh of the history content of books used in schools of the CNEI and those outside its jurisdiction showed that the broad body of literature contained a significant level of Irish material.[10] There existed a sizeable vacuum between the level of material believed to be acceptable to Catholic-nationalists, and that allowed by the CNEI.

Even an advanced text like the Sixth Reading Book, issued in 1891, seemed to give justifiable ground for complaint to nationalists. This reader set out to provide an introduction to the 'higher style of literary composition' through the examination of biographical passages. This stimulation came from a perusal of the lives of Alfred the Great, William Pitt, Samuel Coverley and Warren Hastings. England was cited as 'our' land, with the assumption that the personalities and topics mentioned, including Magna Carta, could properly be styled as part of an Irish child's inheritance. In such a presentation, no barrier separated the identities of the Irish and the English child.[11]

The context of history teaching during the latter years of the century encouraged the reader to draw moral value from the study. Advice available in 1883 indicated that history teaching had a practical value which dependend upon the 'uniformity of the laws of human nature'. It followed that a child should benefit by the "courage, fortitutde and wisdom of Alfred (the Great), by the selfish inhumanity .. of (King) John, ... (and) the moral weakness of the Stuarts". But while this primer of teaching method encouraged children living at the "centre of an empire on which the sun never set" to use their imagination, Irish children were denied this superior moral and mental training as practised in England.[12]

But while the history content was insidious and peripheral in the hidden curriculum of the national schools, the subject had a higher profile in those outside the jurisdiction of the CNEI. Indeed it was argued by some Protestants that history was too important a subject to be neglected on the curriculum. A Scottish pastor contended that no history could be taught in Irish schools because the "Roman Catholics read the records of the progress of civilization differently from Protestants". The past was a blank, and so peasants were not insulated from "all appeals of the demagogue to mere passion or ignorance".[13] The Church Education Society (CES), formed in 1839, guaranteed that religion would be respected in the daily running of the school: "It is the fundamental principle ... that ... the Holy Scriptures shall be used in the daily instructions of every child in attendance, who is capable of reading". In the highest classes English history was to the fore, with an element of Irish history being offered in the fifth standard. Irish and English history shared the narrow time slot for 'spelling and reading and history' with Roman history in sixth standard.[14]

Only in the period 1854 to 1857 was a book dealing solely with Irish history in use. Otherwise, the history syllabus mainly concerned the story of England and her colonies. Over half of the books recommended for use in their schools dealt with religious history, with the Church of Ireland, and personalities of the Reformation such as Luther and Calvin. Nine history books were sanctioned and sold by the CES in 1868, and the two items of Irish interest dealt with 'Irish Church History' and the 'Church History of Ireland'. By 1895, the use of biographies had lapsed, and the histories dealt with English and Empire dimensions. In the Society's training college in Kildare Place only a small proportion of the timetable was devoted to history - one hour out of a total of thirty-four for men, and two hours out of forty-eight for women.[15]

The students took exams in Old Testament history, the 'History of the Book of Common Prayer', the 'History of the Irish Church', and English history. The questions in 1868 ranged from the chronological to the impossible. They were asked, inter alia, to state when the Book of Common Prayer had been "finally settled upon as we now possess it", and to indicate what had been the principal obstacle (note the singular!) to the spread of the reformation in Ireland. The toughest assignment appeared on the English history paper: "Contrast the social condition of the people of England previous to the Roman Invasion with that of the present day, and trace the progress of the improvement".[16] This history provision - with a minimum of Irish history - indicated the pattern which most likely would have been adopted in Protestant-managed schools if history had been allowed by the CNEI.

A large Catholic contingent attended the Society's schools - a total of 38,000 out of 110,000 in 1849. After the Act of Disestablishment in 1869, this representation declined as managers opted to come under the control of the CNEI. John Garrett, a vicar at Penzance in 1859 who had supervised in the CES schools at one time, strongly argued that the Society should take advantage of the rules of the CNEI, and place every school under its jurisdiction. By April 1894, the CES had only 5,000 Catholics on its rolls. Like the Catholic Church, the Anglicans accommodated themselves within the national school system, preserving its religious identity, but jettisoning history. In doing so, they rejected the arguments of opponents of the CNEI that the Bible would be rejected in the public school. By 1894, the CNEI catered for over one million pupils.[17]

On the Catholic side the Christian Brothers provided the most celebrated example of a group working independently from the CNEI. They prepared many of their own texts, and they were considered by contempories to be important transmitters of Catholic thought and culture. Although the title of some of the texts appeared to be innocuous - The Spelling Expositor, School Grammer of the English Language, or The Geographical Reader - no Christian Brother book received sanction from the CNEI. Some of these texts were unofficially used in the CNEI schools until 1874, with only The Historical Class-Book being apprehended in 1867. An Outline of Irish History (1876) was also used in some of the Order's primary schools.[18]

The Historical Class-Book dealt with Irish, English and general history. The Brothers published it because they believed that "no adequate manual of General History had ... been provided for the use of Catholic schools".[19] This book was used in the middle years of the century in conjunction with A Catechism of Irish History, by William O'Neill Daunt. In 1879, the Brothers published their own Catechism of Irish History, a small, one penny pamphlet. A simplified version of O'Neill Daunt, it quickly established itself as the most popular history book in their primary schools.

Cardinal Cullen staunchly defended the historical work of the Brothers. His sensitivities concerning possible abuses of history were echoed by the Irish hierarchy at the Synod of Thurles in 1850: it had decreed that Catholics should only be taught by Catholics in matters of religion, morals and history. This point was reiterated at the general meeting of bishops in 1859, which condemned the teaching of history to Catholics in the model or normal schools.[20]

Cullen's evidence in 1869 to the Powis Commission, as part of an energetic defence of the Catholic interpretation of history, refuted suggestions that the Historical Classbook manifested an 'extreme hostility to England and to Englishmen' on almost every page. He insisted that facts which were 'not creditable to the English government' could not be ignored - "unless you condemn us to ignore the history of our country". While the Brothers taught the facts of history 'as they occurred', they inculcated an attachment to the Catholic faith. As teachers, they stressed that the "perpetration of these facts ... (had) nothing to do with the government of the present day". To crown this thesis of loyalty, he stated that only one student of the Brothers had been arraigned for Fenianism.[21]

Cullen would exclude nothing from a history book, insisting, "I would bring out all that was true." This expansive concept could not be accommodated within the narrower parameters of the CNEI policy. The fears and limitations were well expressed by Sir R.N. Redington, commissioner of the Board in 1854. At the 1854 commission of inquiry, he stated that pupils should be given a small ration of history: otherwise they would be reared "with such antipathy to each other, ... that they will be likely to disgrace the period in which they live by their protest." While he regarded history as being 'highly desirable', he did not believe that a detailed history could be drawn up with which all parties could agree.[22]

Despite, or maybe because of, an historical education at Cambridge, Redington felt that children should not learn about the Reformation, or about the Irish chapters of the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, or James II. When pressed about the exclusion of history from the schools, he said - and this has echoes of 1986 - that there were 'many more important' subjects on the curriculum.[23]

This ban on the Reformation fuelled the indignation of a Scottish critic of the national system. Rev. William Fraser from Paisley was horrified that an Irish national school in a "Protestant empire ... forbids all reference to Reformation times, ... heroes, ... or principles".[24]

The most dramatic confrontation at the Powis commission involving the Christian Brothers - with the emphasis on Church history - and the CNEI - with its censorship - came with the examination of Brother John Grace by Mister Brooke. Faced with a ruthless cull from *The Historical Class-Book* and the *Literary Class-Book* which were deemed to be disloyal or vindictive, Grace reiterated Cullen's view that the unsavoury elements of the past could not be ignored. He contended that if the Brothers did not modify the presentation of the history of conquest, the pupils would learn of extremist views elsewhere without any qualifying moral standard. Christian forgiveness could be compatible with the story of 'what their ancestors had suffered for their faith'. Grace also echoed Cullen's belief in the 'truth' of history:

> ... there ... (is) nothing immoral in teaching historical truth, even though many of the facts stated carry with them unpleasant recollections. If so, all history should be expunged, and no record left of the past. 25

And here rested the kernal of the historical controversies within the national system. At the core of the arguments of Cullen, Grace, Redington, Fraser and other representations and reservation, lay religion. Spiritual identity was underpinned with a litany of victories and a drum roll of persecutions - otherwise spiritual identity existed in a vacuum. Religion was a more substantive motivator than any political concern. Religion defined and moulded political and social attitudes. If nationalism is interpreted as exclusively or predominently secular in this arena, it fails to focus on the importance of the doctrinal issues. The Reformation strode like a spectre over the education of a million Irish students.

The changing context of history teaching during these years also cautions us against adopting a political interpretation. Cullen contended that "there was scarcely a single Fenian among all those poor boys" who learned their history from the Christian Brothers,[26] thus refuting allegations that historical allusions provided the most direct training for Fenianism. Yet fifty years after the fiasco of the Fenian rising, the Christian Brothers accounted for the largest school grouping among the 1916 rebels.

This involvement in 1916 was not a definite indicator that the history teaching of the Brothers took a new direction in the twentieth century. One should also consider the role of those past pupils, educated in the same classrooms as the rebels, who joined the British army in sizable numbers during the first world war. The context of Irish nationalism changed during the 1890s and 1900s, and history reflected rather than instigated this change. Educational reforms introduced by the CNEI in 1900 treated history as a 'national' topic, much as it was taught in Germany or France - patriotic, but not subversive.

The characteristics of the texts of the CNEI and the Brothers often coincided when considering social, cultural or religious factors which had not a direct impact in Ireland. In the 1862 edition of the CNEI's Supplement to the Fourth Book of Lessons, Mahomet was said to have "artfully mingled many of the Jewish and Christian doctrines and forms of worship with those of his own". His 'celebrated imposture' meant that he was a false prophet. Mind you, this book also set the date of Creation at 4000 B.C.![27] The Christian Brothers were equally scathing: he built a 'monstrous compound' from heresies and fancies, using "force of arms (and) ...

the enticement of sensual pleasure" to establish his creed.[28]

The Christian Brothers were not the only religious congregration to teach Irish history. The Presentation Brothers in Carrick-on-Shannon, circa 1900, enthused M.J. McManus - a future literary editor of the *Irish Press* - with a passion for Irish history:

> a brother ... knew his history and
> ... never tired of teaching it ...
> He was a great man for anniversaries
> (and) in a rich Cork accent he would
> tell the class, ... "Do you know
> what happended on this day in 1803?
> Did your fathers and mothers ever
> tell you about Emmet's Rising? If
> they didn't, they ought to be ashamed
> of themselves." 29

A Presentation Brothers' school in Tralee used P.W.E. Joyce's *A Concise History of Ireland* in 1896, two years before the CNEI sanctioned their first book on Irish history *A Child's History of Ireland* also by Joyce.[30]

Joyce's book did not contain the emotive level which so disturbed the CNEI. He could express admiration for key nationalist figures without threatening the denominational touchstone of the inspectorate. His treatment of Shane O'Neill established a logical personal and historical context for his rebellious behaviour. The courtiers of Elizabeth, he alleged, tried to take advantage of his vulnerable position while O'Neill stayed in London: it was craft against craft, and the 'crooked officials of London met their match'.[31] Joyce's texts presented an individualistic, heroic view of history. Characters were motivated by identifiable incentives - honour, greed, bravery, cruelty - providing children with the morality of the fairy tale.

Contrast this with the extravagent language of

William F. Collier, in his *Central Figures of Irish History*, a book definitely on the CNEI Index. O'Neill was lustful, cruel, drunken, a semi-savage, an Irish Bluebeard.[32] Colourful indeed, with unwelcome moral overtones.

The CNEI feared history as a covert agency for political or religious indoctrination, and the subject was sanctioned for reading only in 1900 when the inspectors took a broad view of the socialisation factors. The use of imagination was not encouraged in this stratified situation. The goal of history in the institution was to produce knowledge, not individual bias.

The lack of Irish history meant that pupils had to rely on the resources of their society, on the home, the ballad, and the poem, for historical knowledge. Father John McMenamin from Donegal told the Powis Commissioners that students ignorant of history would read 'violent articles' in the press, and adopt "isolated one-sided views without due reflection,... (that) drive them into evil associations." Dr. Keane, Catholic Bishop of Cloyne, claimed that there would be less "appetite for the food supplied by newspapers and other sources" if a history could be written "without any serious objections".[33] Some dream!

Provincial newspapers provided plentiful evidence of these dramatic tableaux of the past. As the staple diet of the literate peasant, one can empathise with the impact of such raw venom. An anonymous writer in the Tipperary Star of October 1855 asked that a select committee should prepare and publish

> a political catechism for the people of Ireland ... describing the murders, robbery, plunders and confiscation, so scientifically practised by the

> Saxon invaders on our victimised,
> defenceless forefathers. [34]

The tales of the distant past, the insistence in political terms that Ireland could be a nation once again (as she might have been) were harnessed to the campaigns and rhetoric of nationalist politicans of all shades of green. Parnell, Redmond, Dillon - each prepared his speeches with the compulsory dollop of mythology. Nationalist campaigns were firmly placed in a tradition of protest against conquest. At the height of the land war, an editorial in *United Ireland* focussed on the historical antecedents of the agrarian struggle:

> For every man that CAREW butchered, whom CROMWELL sold into slavery, whom CARHAMPTON scorched with pitch-caps, there are fifty thousand ready to take up the fight where TYRONE, where OWEN ROE, where SARSFIELD, where TONE, where EMMET, where O'CONNELL, where MITCHEL, where ALLEN, LARKIN and O'BRIEN left it off .. (The English) are surprised to find there is something behind the Land agitation. [35]

The 'other sources' which so troubled Dr. Keane included cheap editions of nationalist literary classics - John Mitchel's *Jail Journal*, A.M. Sullivan's *Story of Ireland Speeches from the Dock*, or *The Spirit of the Nation*. These could be bought at markets or fairs. Patriotic literature and histories often featured as prizes at GAA matches of clubs in the 1880s and the 1890s. Such prizes included D'Arcy Magee's *History of Ireland*. Recommending the use of book prizes dealing with the language and literature of Ireland, Michael Cusack considered that the 'moral and intellectual life' of the country would be developed. The 1889 GAA convention recommended that the association should foster by every means in its power,

> the study and cultivation of the Irish language, history, poetry, music and literature, by having good debates and lectures upon these subjects. [36]

A. M. Sullivan's hugely successful Story of Ireland detailed in passionate rhetoric the struggle and tribulations of history as viewed from the nationalist perspective. He wrote in the 'manner of the simple storytellers', bridging the gap between the oral and the literate levels. The oral tradition figured prominently in the childhood of a Cork republican, Liam Deasy. He noted, as did Patrick Pearse in 1904, the vivid inclusion of local associations in the national story. This factor was acknowledged in 1908 when the CNEI introduced a compulsory Irish history course which stressed the role of local history.[37]

Bards might lack basic literacy skills in English, but peasants who read increasingly turned to books on Ireland and Irish history. The decline in the oral tradition dovetailed with the success of the CNEI in raising educational standards. An estimated literacy rate of 53 per cent for those aged five and over (!) improved to 86 per cent by 1901. A.M. Sullivan acknowledged that the national schools had achieved 'nothing short of a miracle'. He contended that there existed

> scarcely a farmhouse or working man's home in all the land in which the boy or girl of fifteen, or the young man or women of twenty-five, cannot read the newspaper for "the old people".

Rev. John Garrett, an Anglican advocate of the national system, commented as early as 1859 that even the 'partial effects' of education had introduced a revolution into the 'physical condition' of Ireland.[38] Like other Victorian commentators, Garrett identified the condition of the country with the condition of education.

The new literacy transformed the manner of communicating political opinion. As Sullivan strikingly expressed it, the peasant had no longer to rely on Sunday gossip or the advice of Fr. Tom for his political views.[39] Irish publishing houses took full account of the calls for a vigorous. native literature. David P. Moran, founder and editor of The Leader, had blamed the encroachment of anglicisation on the lack of a cheap and accessible Irish literature. He demanded the publication of material 'relative to the Irish past - (a) literature strenuously Gaelic and not Anglo Gaelic.' [40]

Dermot Trench, writing about the Gaelic League in 1907, recorded that it was no longer difficult to obtain books of Irish interest, as it had been in 1893. The catalogues of M.H. Gill testified to this opinion. Their 1892 list dealt mainly with ecclesiastical literature. The Irish language material took up one-and-a-half pages. By 1908, the separate listing of Irish material ran to forty-two pages. Irish titles were not translated into English, as they had been in the earlier edition.[41]

So, overall, what impact did the exclusion of history have on the transmission of history. It did not quell nationalist endeavour, as the fierce struggle after 1916 showed. It did not quell the swelling awareness of history, as the topic was lifted on the rising tide of nationalist aspirations. Indeed the curious impression that more history was then learnt outside the formal school situation has been paralleled by the findings of an English research project into the historical awareness of nine and ten-year olds. The children identified and interpreted historical stimuli such as photographs/pictures and documents. It transpired that some 65 per cent of their historical awareness stemmed from out-of-school resources, from families, television, advertisements, cereal packets, and the like.[42] Then, as now, history did not depend on compulsion for its survival in society.

The CNEI over-emphasised the power of history to influence or to corrupt. Adult perceptions of what can be conveyed to pupils about the nature of society do not always come out as the teachers intend, viz., the humourous howlers which abound on examination scripts. The transmission is an invisible process and cannot be shackled in an open society. The CNEI refused to allow their classrooms to witness the clash between doctrinal and mythological aspirations. Irish history was banned because of a strong belief that doctrinal controversies could obscure educational factors.

The status of history should not been seen in isolation, interesting though it might be, but as part of an underlying tension between the aims of education and the broad political control of society. Because the national system was rigid, teachers had no control over the curriculum. The bonds were loosened only in response to pleas for a wider cultural provision in the schools. The strength of this appeal was recognised in a wide-ranging history curriculum introduced in 1908, which gave a degree of teacher autonomy in teaching local history. With history in the schools of the majority of pupils, it made no great political impact. History was not a seething school for scandal.

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ARCHBISHOP WALSH AND THE COMMISSION ON MANUAL AND PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION

Patrick F. O'Donovan

William J. Walsh, formerly president of St.Patrick's College Maynooth, was appointed Archbishop of Dublin in 1885 and was a leading figure in the Irish Church until his death in 1921. Dr. Walsh was closely identified with educational affairs during his episcopacy and played a major role in the work of the Vice-Regal Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction.

Early in his career, Walsh showed himself to be disciplined and scholarly in his studies and later proved to be extremely capable as an organiser and administrator. An avid reader, he had considerable expertise in matters of law, theology, history and economics and published articles and pamphlets relating to these areas.

Walsh took a keen interest in educational affairs and studied the historical and administrative detail relating to primary, intermediate and university education. In his extensive writings, in speeches and in private correspondence Dr. Walsh made an important contribution to the Irish education question. He devoted considerable time to a close examination of the background to the traditional Catholic demands in education and forcefully pressed the claims of the hierarchy in regard to greater denominationalism in education. His book Statement of the Chief Grievances of Irish Catholics published in 1890 restated the attitude of the Church on various issues affecting primary, intermediate and university education and was an important affirmation of the traditional Catholic position on Irish education.[1] Within a few years of his accession to the See of Dublin, Archbishop Walsh was unquestionably the hierarcy's leading authority on matters pertaining to education.

Archbishop Walsh and the National Board

In 1894, just two years after he had accepted a seat on the less contentious Intermediate Board, Dr. Walsh was offered a seat on the National Board. This came about as part of an attempt by a number of prominent commissioners, among them Chief Baron Palles, to modify Board regulations concerning religious instruction. This was a concerted effort on the part of the National Board to give greater effect to the school attendance provisions of the 1892 Irish Education Act and at the same time to allow Christian Brothers' schools and Church Education Society schools to receive financial assistance from the Board. Despite repeated efforts by the commissioners to formulate acceptable rules, the government resolutely rejected all the Board's proposals which would have had the effect of making the system more overtly denominational.

Following consultations with the other archbishops and despite the strong opposition of Cardinal Logue, Dr. Walsh accepted the nomination and became a commissioner early in 1895 soon after the death of Sir Patrick Keenan the Resident Commissioner. Walsh was very prominently associated with the commissioners' attempts to modify the rules governing religious instruction[2] and despite the strong alliance between Catholic and Church of Ireland commissioners in favour of greater denominationalism, the matter was dropped in 1896. Although Walsh considered resignation, he remained on the Board and became one of the most active members over the following few years.

In contrast to some of the commissioners, Walsh was a most regular attender at the weekly meetings in Marlborough Street and he participated very fully in the work of the Board. In a number of ways he asserted himself as a commissioner with a more than usual interest in the affairs of national education. For example in 1895, he proposed that the commissioners review the training college annual examinations held under the auspices of the Board and marked by the inspectors. Walsh was responsible for a revision of the marking, the promotion of several candidates and changes in the procedures for holding the examinations. Strong resentment was felt on the part of some of the most senior inspectors at the unprecedented action of the commissioners. Further evidence of Walsh's special attention to Board business came in 1896 on the question of the Parliamentary School Grant. Walsh drew up a long and detailed statement on the financial arrangements made under the 1892 Irish Education Act for the distribution of excise duties in aid of education in Ireland. A substantial underpayment by the treasury to the National Board occurred in respect of the years 1892-1896 and Walsh drew attention to the matter in the public press. In a series of letters, Walsh correctly pointed out that the money withheld by the treasury would have been distributed among teachers as part of the "Residual Grant".[3] This matter coincided with the report of a Royal Commission which indicated that Ireland had been seriously overtaxed since the Union. After a long delay the treasury finally agreed to make up the arrears in 1900 resulting in the payment of over £95,000 to national teachers. It is clearly of significance that Walsh was so prominently involved in securing for the Board an important victory over the treasury especially as the Board's powers in matters of finance had been considerably eroded during the previous decades.[4] Thus within a short period Walsh had established himself as among the most active, capable and interested of the commissioners of national education.

The Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction

In February 1896, the Recess Committee considered a confidential memorandum drawn up by Monsignor Gerald Molloy outlining a comprehensive scheme for technical education in Ireland.[5] Dr. Walsh was familiar with the deliberations of the Recess Committee and corresponded regularly with some of its leading members. Walsh was himself interested in the agricultural and industrial needs of the the country and had strong views on the literary bias in the elementary school programme. A few weeks after the Recess Committee had discussed Mgr. Molloy's memorandum, Walsh proposed and had accepted at the National Board a motion to look into the introduction of a "well considered system of manual instruction". Subsequently Walsh drew up, largely on his own, a statement on behalf of the commissioners concerning manual instruction and he was the spokesman for a deputation of the Board that waited on the Lord Lieutenant in August 1896 to publicise the matter. It appears likely that it was Walsh who initiated the request for a commission of inquiry. In due course the Vice-Regal Commission on Manual and Practical Instruction was appointed under the chairmanship of the Earl of Belmore in January 1897. Ten of its fourteen members were Commissioners of National Education, the other four being Mgr. G. Molloy and Lord Belmore and two inspectors from Britain, T.B. Shaw and J. Struthers. The terms of reference for the commission were narrow. It was to inquire and report with a view to determining how far, and in what form manual and practical instruction should be included in the programme for national schools. Fundamental questions of administration and financing were outside its scope although aspects of these were live issues at the time.

The work of the commission was impressive. In the course of eighteen months it held 93 meetings, interviewed

186 persons, visited 119 schools, sent representatives to England, Scotland, Denmark and Sweden and received reports from America, Germany, France, Holland and Switzerland. Four volumes of evidence were printed and the final report was presented in June 1898.[6]

Archbishop Walsh took a very active part in the work of the commission. He travelled to Birmingham, London, Liverpool and Kendal during March and April 1897 for the taking of evidence at those centres. In October he attended in Edinburgh and Glasgow for the same purpose. On many occasions he chaired the public hearings and was a dominant figure in its deliberations. His questioning of witnesses showed him to have a good acquaintance with the various aspects of manual instruction and frequently it was Walsh who elicited from key witnesses the vital pieces of information which shaped the final report. For example, although the payment by results system did not come within its terms of reference, Walsh questioned a number of witnesses closely on changes that had been effected in inspection in England and Scotland. Walsh's observations to Sir Joshua Fitch, a former inspector from England and an influential witness before the commission, reveal that Walsh was strongly in favour of major reform of the results system.

During the early part of 1898 Walsh devoted considerable time to drafting various sections of the final report. Although T.B. Shaw and J. Struthers had returned to their work in Britain, both appear to have made important contributions to the report and Walsh corresponded with them regularly. C.T. Redington and Mgr. G. Molloy also helped in the compilation of the report. Another member of the commission who worked on the final report was G.F. Fitzgerald, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Trinity College and a leading man of science who was keenly interested in reform of both primary and intermediate education. A letter from Chief Baron Palles to Walsh written a few days before the signing of the report gives a good insight into the amount of work that Walsh gave to the Belmore Commission:

> You attended more meetings than anyone, you took the leading part in bringing out the leading features that required to be developed - you drafted fully one half the Report and took the leading part in amending and improving the other part. [7]

The death of Lord Plunkett and the serious illness of Belmore resulted in Dr. Walsh becoming the first signatory to the report. This honour was well deserved in view of his enormous contribution to the work of the commission so much so that Lord Monteagle could with justification remark that it might have been called the "Archbishop Walsh Commission".[8]

The final report proposed sweeping changes in the primary school curriculum and implied considerable reorganisation of national education. Kindergarten was recommended to be extended as much as possible while its principles and methods were to be continued through the junior classes. Hand and eye training and educational woodwork were suggested as suitable for older children to form a comprehensive scheme of manual instruction in primary schools. Drawing, singing, drill and physical exercises were recommended to be taught to all children. Elementary science including object lessons and simple experiments, were also recommended and this, rather than agriculture as a subject, was seen as appropriate to the national school. Cookery, laundry work, domestic science and needlework were included as suitable for girls. The new subjects were to be gradually introduced with the aid of expert advisers and the programme of the training colleges was to be speedily revised. The report was emphatically against the application of the results system to the new subjects and indicated the need for change in the whole panoply of payment by results. Taken as a whole the commission represented an important landmark in national education in Ireland. A changed conception of the meaning and purpose of education was enshrined in its report. Its publication in 1898 was an event of great importance and had dramatic effect on Irish primary education.

The commission was clearly influenced a great deal by the ideas gaining widespread acceptance in Britain and elsewhere at the time. Prominent features of the new trends included a greater emphasis on infant education, concern for practical subjects and increased awareness of the educational ideas of Froebel and Pestalozzi. Archbishop Walsh with his customary thoroughness familiarised himself with much of the background information that was relevant to the work of the commission and was especially knowledgeable on aspects of technical education. It is notable, however, that Walsh did not himself have first-hand experience of the school system having to rely instead on reading and the observations of those who were acquainted with the work of schools. Regrettably the Belmore Commission did not focus attention on the many problems that existed in the national school system. Matters such as the proliferation of small schools, the unsuitability of buildings and lack of equipmnt, irregularity of attendance, the lack of local financial support and heavy reliance on central funding for education were all important factors which vitally affected the introduction of a new curriculum and to which the Belmore Commission paid insufficient attention.

A noteworthy feature of the Belmore Commission's examination of members of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation was Dr. Walsh's obvious hostility and dismissiveness towards Terence Clarke and John Coffey President and Secretary respectively of the I.N.T.O. This can best be understood in the context of the bitter controversy that existed throughout the 1890's over the security of tenure of teachers. The question of arbitrary and unjust dismissal of teachers was the subject of a prolonged and acrimonious dispute between leading members of the I.N.T.O. and the hierarchy. The circumstances that gave rise to the Maynooth Resolution in 1894 and its revision in 1898 resulted in several denunciations of the teachers' organisation and especially its executive committee by the hierarchy.[9] Dr. Walsh was instrumental in preventing the security of tenure question from posing a serious challenge to the existing managerial structure and it is apparent that he was the most formidable defender of Church control in the national schools. The fact that the teachers' views were given peremptory treatment during and after the Belmore Commission did not augur well for the successful implementation of the reforms that were contemplated.

A serious flaw in the report was its superficial and naive approach in relation to adequate financial arrangements to facilitate the introduction of the new subjects. The report stated...

> ... the changes we have recommended cannot be carried out without a considerable expenditure of money. But we feel confident that the State, which so largely maintains and controls the system of National Education in Ireland, will not hesitate to provide the necessary funds for improving that system ... 10

In the aftermath of the report, Walsh and the other commissioners did not address this matter with the foresight and perspicacity it merited. Unfortunately this was

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to cause considerable difficulties later and ironically enough, it was an important element in bringing about Walsh's resignation from the National Board in controversial circumstances in 1901.

Following the publication of the Belmore report, Walsh was very active in promoting its recommendations. Of particular importance was his proposal in December 1898 that the National Board should "consider the advisability of submitting another form of payment to the teachers for that at present in operation".[11] This represented a significant advance on the Belmore findings and in effect meant that the commissioners were now attempting to end the results system completely. In February 1899, Dr. W.J.M. Starkie took over as Resident Commissioner and he immediately set about devising a new system for calculating teachers' salaries and preparing the new programme of instruction for national schools. The I.N.T.O. executive report for 1900 commended Walsh's role in edning the results system:

> It is easy to see that the advent of Dr. Walsh to the Education Board was the prelude to a deathblow to that 'deadly incubus' known as the results system, which, according to his eminent authority, in 'thousands of national schools is simply trampling out whatever vestige of educational life is still to be found in them!. 12

One concludes that Dr. Walsh was one of the main driving forces in ending the system of payment by results. His influence on the Belmore Commission and subsequently at the National Board was of crucial importance in brining to a close the results era in Irish primary education.

It is worth noting that Walsh was active at this time in seeking to reform Intermediate Education as he was one of those instrumental in setting up the Intermediate

Education Commission, known as the Palles Commission, in May 1898. This commission attempted to introduce changes into the intermediate system particularly in regard to results payments based on written examinations. Despite Walsh's efforts this commission did not significantly alter the existing arrangements and failed to give intermediate education a new orientation.

With regard to technical education, Archbishop Walsh gave support to the work of the Recess Committee and was well acquainted with the developments that were taking place for setting up the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. Walsh was broadly in agreement with the new scheme which incorporated the principles of rate aid and local control and which contrasted sharply with the arrangements governing the national and intermediate systems. The Belmore Commission in a sense prepared the ground for the future setting up of technical schools and educating opinion to accept the need for them. Walsh's close identification with the commission's work and his forceful influence among the bishops were important factors in securing the approval of the hierarchy for the changes that were taking place.

Dr. Walsh proposed an amendment which was included in the Agriculture and Technical Instruction Act of 1899 to set up a concultative committee for the purpose of securing coordination in educational administration in Ireland.[13] This however, proved completely inadequate as a means of assuring cohesion between the various sectors in Irish education. A few years later when major reform of the administrative structures was contemplated Walsh and the hierarchy were strongly opposed to change.

Concluding remarks on Dr. Walsh's influence

Archbishop Walsh played a very prominent part in many of the developments that occurred in Irish education in the last decade of the nineteenth century. By his participation in the National and Intermediate Boards and his close association with developments in technical education, he had a considerable influence on events at a period of significant reassessment of educational aims. His position as Archbishop of Dublin and his contact with many of the leading figures behind the scenes enabled him to exercise an important influence on the events that unfolded from the deliberations of the Recess Committee. It had provided the stimulus that gave birth to a notable reform movement which embraced primary, intermediate and technical education. Dr. Walsh through his interest in education and his concern for national and economic progress involved himself very fully with the movement towards reform and was one of its most influential figures.

His work on behalf of the Commission on Manual and Practical instruction was certainly the most notable of his achievements. He made an outstanding contribution to the commission's final report and was especially influential in breaking the stranglehold of payment by results on primary education and introducing a new and modern curriculum for national schools.

At another level Archbishop Walsh's influence was of profound and enduring significance. His unwavering allegiance to Church interests in education took precedence throughout his period of active involvement in educational affairs. He was especially influential in consolidating and reinforcing the Irish Church's position in the education system at a time when curricular change and innovation might have precipitated fundamental review of the administration and financing of Irish education.

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COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LEGISLATION FOR IRISH SCHOOLCHILDREN, 1892 AND 1926

Michael Quinlivan

Introduction

Compulsory school attendance legislation has long been accepted as a desideratum in the world at large, although if one were to canvass the views of those most closely involved - the schoolchildren - a hostile reaction would be the probable outcome. Recent decades, have, however, seen a questioning of the whole notion of schooling with the advent of such works as Illich's Deschooling Society,[1] Reimer's School is Dead[2] and, in Maire Mullarney's Anything School Can Do, You Can Do Better.[3] Against this backdrop of a reappraisal of schooling, this paper examines compulsory attendance legislation for Irish schoolchildren. The following are some key questions worth considering. What was the climate surrounding the introduction of both acts? What issues came to the fore? How did the various power groups make their influence felt? Did the fact that the 1926 Act was introduced by a native government make it an easier pill to swallow than the colonial government's 1892 measure?

The main outlines of the Acts of 1892 and 1926[4] can be sketched in quickly. Both Acts obliged children between the ages of six and fourteen to attend school although in the former Act children between eleven and fourteen could be exempted. The compulsory provisions of the earlier Act were to apply to municipal boroughs and towns and townships under commissioners. In 1898, when county councils came into being they could, if they wished, apply the compulsory provisions to their areas. The 1926 Act applied the compulsory provisions to the whole of the Free State. School attendance committees were to be the enforcing authorities for the 1892 Act whereas the 1926 Act specified the Garda Siochana, except in Dublin and its suburbs and Cork, Limerick and Waterford, in which areas school attendance committees would continue in being. The two statutes set out reasonable excuses for non-attendance of the child. Penalties for negligent parents and employers and for the perpetrators of forgeries were included in both measures. Interestingly, in 1892 and 1926, provision was made for a child who was receiving suitable elementary education in a manner other than by attending at a school. But the Act of 1892 went further than introducing obligatory schooling; it was also concerned with a grant to education of some £200,000 which would mean augmenting teachers' salaries and the practical abolition of school fees and further, it conferred power to acquire compulsorily sites for schools and teachers' residences.

The Irish Education Act, 1892

The introduction of compulsory education in 1892 must have jolted the parents concerned yet they cannot be said to have been taken unawares. In England, the seeds of the concept had been sown by an Act of 1870 and it was universal in that country by 1880. France made elementary education compulsory in 1882. With regard to Ireland, although attendance statistics had attracted the attention of the Powis Commission, the report of 1870 did not recommend compulsory attendance legislation for rural areas; with regard to this measure and towns, the report was vague, saying only that it was desirable that provision be made for children of school going age who were not at work.[5] But the issue of obligatory schooling for Ireland was raised in the House of Commons in 1877, again in 1883 and again in 1885.[6]

What was the stated reason for bringing in compulsory attendance legislation in 1892? In introducing the Irish Education Act in the House of Commons on 22 February, 1892, Mr. Jackson, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, referred to the grant of money that was now available and stated that an opportunity was presented to put education in Ireland on a more efficient basis. (It should be noted that the Treasury began to exert an increasing grip on Irish education from 1870 onwards.) Since the introduction of compulsory attendance in England, great improvements were discernible there in the average attendance at the schools. He pointed out that twenty years previously the average attendances in England and Ireland, compared with the population, were more or less equal. However, by 1890 the position was that the average attendance in Ireland in proportion to the number on the rolls as compared with England had fallen away until it was 20 per cent behindhand.[7] In an attempt to emphasise his argument he compared the average attendance in the schools of England with the total population of that country; this yielded a figure of 12.9 per cent. Corresponding figures for Scotland and Ireland respectively were 13 per cent and 10.4 per cent.[8] Then he looked at the outcome when one applied the England and Scottish figure (i.e. 13 per cent) to Ireland's population. This led him to conclude that "you have from 110,000 to 120,000 children in Ireland who ought to be in school, and who are not in school."[9]

But the wider implications of the new measure cannot have been lost on Jackson and the government: the "hidden curriculum" is not a latter day phenomenon. The extension of the franchise with qualifications to the working classes of England consequent on Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867 had the effect of alerting the government to the dangers of an illiterate electorate and quelled many of the objections to compulsory education.[10] An English education act containing the seed of compulsory schooling had followed in 1870.[11] A franchise act of 1884 had trebled the Irish electorate (from 200,000 to 700,000) giving almost universal suffrage to the country.[12] With Home Rule for Ireland a very live issue, the British Government may well have felt that an Irish electorate with elementary education presented a better proposition than an illiterate electorate.

The decade leading up to 1892 was a turbulent and significant one in Irish affairs. Already the "Three F's" - fair rents, fixity of tenure and free sale - had been brought in by way of amelioration of some of the grievances of the tenant farmers. But the decade opened with the Phoenix Park murders. Coercive legislation was a feature of these years. In the second half of that ten-year period, agrarian disturbances again occupied the government's attention. However, by the end of that decade the Irish Party under Parnell's leadership had become experienced in parliamentary principles and practices (at the time of the 1892 Act's introduction, of course, Parnell had been dead for five months and now the Irish Party was bitterly divided). In 1887 and again in 1888 two land acts beneficial to tenant farmers had been passed.[13] Taking all these developments into account, compulsory schooling may have seemed to Jackson a step down the road to peace in Ireland.

Reaction of the churches and the teachers' organisation

In 1892 the majority of national schools in Ireland were under the control of the Catholic hierarchy and it is to be expected that their proclamations on the matter of compulsion would carry no little weight. Although so influential a prelate as Dr. Walsh of Dublin had expressed himself in favour of a reasonable measure of compulsion at the teachers' congress of 1889,[14] by May, 1892, when the Bill was being debated in Parliament, the bishops' attitude in regard to direct compulsion had hardened. The compulsory clauses, they declared, were "a grave and uncalled-for interference with the constitutional rights of parents. They are, besides utterly opposed to the natural feelings of our people."[15] But the prelates would approve of indirect compulsion through measures such as a prohibition on employment of children under thirteen and debarring from monitorships those pupils with poor attendance records.[16]

Protestant reaction was one of welcome although the distribution of the grant was a subject of some debate. This was discussed at a meeting attended by representatives of the various Protestant denominations in the Antient Concert Rooms on 17 December, 1891. At that meeting also the Lord Archbishop of Dublin referred to compulsory education saying that if it were to be introduced, "there would all the more vital necessity for those safeguards which at present exist for the conscience of those who attend their schools".[17] At the General Synod of the Church of Ireland held in April 1892 the President spoke of the Education Bill as "calculated to confer inestimable benefits upon our Church".[18] At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, held in June, 1892, the principle of the Bill was approved and there was a call for the extension of compulsory education to the whole country.

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (I.N.T.O.) was about twenty-three years in existence at the time of the Bill's introduction. In its journal of November, 1891, it is stated that "every one so far as we know is in favour of some form of compulsory attendance..."[19] But it was acknowledged that there might be difficulties in regard to universal application of the measure. One of these difficulties was highlighted in the report of an inspector of schools when he referred to children in Donegal being hired out to farmers and the hardship that would accrue to poor families if obligatory schooling was introduced.[20] The money grant proposed in the Bill must have been welcome news to the teachers and a deputation set off for London to lobby support for the Bill in May, 1892. In particular, Mr. Tom Sexton, one of the Irish members in Parliament, was causing the teachers to have anxious moments.[21]

Sexton would not wish to deprive the teachers of the money grant but the matter of compulsion was a contentious one. Indeed, he would wish for two separate bills, one dealing with the money grant, the other with compulsory attendance.[22] He referred in Parliament to the imminence of Home Rule: "But on the eve of the establishment of an Irish Parliament, I should hesitate to think the subject of compulsion in Ireland was a suitable one for this Assembly to deal with."[23] A facet of the Bill that made for difficulty was the fact that the schools of the Irish Christian Brothers were excluded from the proposed grant money.[24] Sexton was absent from the I.N.T.O. deputation's meeting with Jackson but a few weeks previously he had introduced to the Chief Secretary the representatives of the Christian Brothers.[25] Two contemporary newspapers took rather different views of Sexton's contributions to the debates. One of them declared that "the collapse of the obstructive campaign organised by Mr. Sexton against the Education Bill has been one of the most remarkable on record."[26] But the

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Freeman's Journal lauded him as follows:

> Mr. Sexton has accomplished a splendid piece of work for Ireland without adding one hour to the life of the Coercionist Ministry. He deserves the approbation which is already being exhibited by his countrymen. 27

The question of the Christian Brothers' schools was raised by a number of speakers. Colonel Nolan (Galway North) regretted that nothing had been done for the Brothers in the proposed disbursement of money. He pointed out that the Brothers operated only in towns and many of these towns would have no other Catholic schools. "So that in the very place where you are going to make education compulsory," he continued, "you will have chiefly the Christian Brothers' schools, and you are going to compel the children to attend these schools; the Christian Brothers are to receive no benefit."[28] Mr. Timothy Healy (Longford North) declared that because the monks, "who devote their days and nights to good works, put up a cruxifex in their schools, the British nostril goes up to an angle of seventy-five degrees."[29]

The Bill received the royal assent on 27 June, 1892, but its compulsory provisions were not to come into force until 1 January, 1894. It had a limited success. At century's end the percentage of average number on rolls in average daily attendance stood at 62.0. The corresponding statistic for 1891 was 61.4.[30] Curtailing the effectiveness of the Act were the numerous exemptions allowed in it, the fact that many districts did not avail of the compulsory provisions and the laxity of school attendance committees in some places. The early decades of the new century would see a clamour for reform.

The 1926 School Attendance Act

Helping towards public acceptance of the 1926 School Attendance Act[31] which extended compulsory attendance to the whole of the Irish Free State was the fact that the measure was being introduced by a native government and also the fact that the ground had been prepared by the 1892 statute. In addition, the many calls for reform from influential sources did much to prepare the public mind. In 1916, Rev. Lambert McKenna called on the citizens of Dublin and other towns to press for a proper school attendance measure, "one which would have penal sanctions at least as severe as those of the English law."[32] The Killanin Report called for the extension of the compulsory provisions of the 1892 Act to all of Ireland[33] and this recommendation was incorporated in the ill-fated MacPherson Bill of 1919.[34] Pressure came from the I.N.T.O. also which convened the First National Programme Conference. The report of the Conference emphasised the deficiencies with regard to school attendance in Ireland and urged the early introduction of remedial legislation.[35] Another important initiative was the publication by the Labour Party in late 1925 of a policy document on education[36] which highlighted unsatisfactory attendance and called for corrective action.[37]

The reaction of the churches to the 1926 legislation was quiet. Indeed, an examination of the reports of the Board of Education of the Church of Ireland to the General Synod for the years 1925-1927 discloses no reference to the new legislation.[38] With regard to the Catholic Church, the bishops did not feel any threat from the state in the matter of education: "Church and State were in harmony in the early days of the new order," writes Patrick J. Wall. "The State accepted that its role in education was subsidiary to that of the Church.."[39] In 1927, the bishops felt able to say that "our educational systems, at least in Southern Ireland, leave little to be desired as far as their relgious character goes."[40] However, a cautionary note was struck by the Rev. Lambert McKenna in the same year when he pointed out that "the Catholic Church has never formally approved of the principle of state education. Rather, she regards it with a certain suspicion."[41] A factor which may have prompted the bishops' pragmatic acceptance of the 1926 Act was the perceived decline in moral standards.[42] A wide range of evils was apparent: intemperance, perjury, gambling, slackening parental control, cinema, radio and newspapers, company-keeping and dancing.[43] It is perhaps symptomatic of the times that a Commission on Evil Literature was set up by the government.[44] The new Act might then have much to recommend it in the bishops' eyes in that it would compel the children to attend the schools where moral decline might be forestalled.

Child labour

An examination of the *Dail Debates* in connection with the passage of the 1926 Bill affords much information on the economic, social and political concerns of the fledgling state. Agriculture was the bedrock of the economic system and to set this industry on a prosperous footing was one of the main aims of the government. Speaking in Co. Cork in 1925, a farmers' leader said that there were 430,000 farmers in the Free State and of these only 30,000 had a valuation exceeding £50. "The Free State," he went on, "is a country of small holdings; in truth it is a peasant State."[45] In addition, Irish agricultural products were subject to increasing competition, very notably from Denmark.[46] It is against this background that a debate on certain exemptions from the obligation to attend school must be viewed.

The Bill as introduced would allow a child of ten years and upwards to be absent legitimately from school for up to ten days in the spring-time and again in the autumn to do light agricultural work for his parent.[47] Amendments proposed by Tomas O Conaill (Vice-Chairman of the Labour Party and General Secretary of the I.N.T.O.) sought to have these two sub-sections deleted from the Bill. O Conaill argued that there was sufficient time outside of school hours to engage the child on its parents' farm - Saturdays were free and, further, during spring, there were the usual Easter holidays of ten to fourteen days. In addition, there was a summer holiday of four to six weeks.[48] Mr. Baxter of the Farmers' Party, opposing, stressed practical economic realities and the value of a child's labour to the farmer: "For short periods during the spring and autumn the value of a child on the farm cannot be over-estimated. In spring, when the seed is being put into the ground, farmers get as valuable a service from the child as from any man."[49] Deputy Good, the seconder of the two amendments, said that the principle behind the exemption periods was an out-of-date one; possibly it might have been acceptable twenty-five years previously but now there were changed views on the interests of the child and the importance of educational work.[50] Both amendments were lost but the relevant sub-sections were modified at a later stage. The age at which the spring and autumn exemptions could be availed of was raised to twelve. Whereas the Bill as introduced exempted the child to do work for his parent, the Act specified that the work had to be done on his parents' land. Finally, the Act provided that the spring and autumn exemptions would only last until the year 1936.[51]

G.M. Trevelyan, in his English Social History,[52] referred to a spirit of humanity that grew up in England in the nineteenth century and that resulted in an amelioration of the worst abuses against children. An act of 1833 limited the amount of hours that could be worked by children in factories. In 1842, children under ten were debarred from working in mines underground. An act of 1875 cured the evil of using boys as chimney sweeps.[53] The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was founded in 1884. Early in the new century, a significant piece of legislation was brought in which covered such aspects of child life as infant life protection, prevention of cruelty to children and young persons, juvenile smoking, reformatory and industrial schools and juvenile offenders.[54] But fine sentiments regarding the interests and welfare of the child being enshrined in law were one thing; harsh economic conditions dictated that in many countries these same sentiments were honoured more in the breach than in the observance. It is against this canvas that an exchange in the Dail between Sir James Craig and Thomas Johnson must be set.

Deputy Craig had spoken in favour of the retention of the spring and autumn exemption periods and in the course of his speech had said: "There are other parts where the children are required for helping at the harvest, and where, in their own particular sphere, they are quite as useful as or even more useful than a grown-up person, because they can do things more actively."[55] In his reply, Thomas Johnson (leader of the Labour Party) made a spirited defence of the interests of the child. He pointed out that children had been removed from working in mines and from the half-time system. The situation whereby children in Donegal were farmed out on pay was an abuse that needed to be remedied (a commission which would report in July, 1926, would refer to children in Donegal being "hired out to service for six or nine months of the year"[56]) Concerning the spring and autumn exemptions, Deputy Johnson went on: "It is unjust to the child of ten years of age to put him to do this particular light agricultural work, as it is called, and to take him away from his school to enable the parents to do the work that is necessary on the farm."[57]

A question of law and order

One of the major tasks of the Cosgrave government which came to power after the general election of August, 1923, was to settle the disturbed state of the country, to swing the population towards the consitutional method of proceeding, to create, in short, respect for law and order. It was a task of daunting proportions as the following events illustrate: the attack on a party of British soldiers and civilians in Queenstown Harbour in 1924; an army mutiny in the same year; attacks on 12 police barracks around the country about the end of 1926 which left two gardai dead; the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins in July, 1927. In bringing in the Attendance Act of 1926, deputies were conscious of a need to proceed cautiously with what might prove to be an unpopular scheme. Whether to bring in an ideal measure or a measure which took account of economic realities and possible resistance to compulsion (but which could be tightened up with the passage of time) was a dilemma that received an airing in the Dail.

T.J. O'Connell had put down an amendment which proposed that the school leaving age be sixteen instead of fourteen (he would envisage education between fourteen and sixteen as being of a part-time nature). Professor O'Sullivan, the Minister for Education, asserted that he himself was not against raising the age to sixteen. But poor parents with large families might wish to get something from the employment of their children between certain ages. The fact had to be recognised and to try to enforce the present amendment (O'Connell's) would be to court disaster. At the start, the age limit of fourteen even would be hard to enforce. He had circulated an amendment which would allow for a gradual extension upwards when the situation was ripe in a particular district.[58] Again, during the debate on the amendments to remove the spring and autumn exemptions, caution and the need to proceed by degrees was exhorted. Deputy Baxter said:

> These parents may be sympathetic towards efforts to make education more highly appreciated, but if we act unreasonably they will adopt an attitude of revulsion towards this measure. That will not, perhaps, be the only opposition which we may expect from them in obeying the law in future. I say that in this matter we must be careful. Let us move warily and thus make more certain of success. [59]

Professor O'Sullivan was sensitive to expected public resistance; exemptions were necessary to mitigate it: "This Bill will be extremely unpopular to enforce. It would be practically impossible to enforce it in many areas unless you make exemptions of this character."[60] By way of a postscript to O'Connell's amendment seeking to raise the upper age limit from fourteen, the Act contained a section giving the Minister power to extend the provisions of the Act to children over fourteen but who had not reached sixteen.[61] The school leaving age was raised to fifteen in 1972.

Conclusion

Both the Acts of 1892 and 1926 were major milestones in the story of elementary education in Ireland. The instigators of the earlier scheme had to contend with the opposition of a powerful hierarchy; the absence of a local system of government outside of the cities and towns until some four years after the compulsory provisions came into force; the reluctance of a number of places to avail of the compusory provisions while the Christian Brothers' schools were excluded from state aid. But it did set a precedent: it sowed the idea of compulsory schooling and thus when the 1925 legislators set to work they had that much going in their favour. Among the other favourable pointers was the sophisticated I.N.T.O. lobby; pragmatic acceptance by the Catholic Church (but not outright approbation); the sense that if the fruits of the newly won independence were to be realised an educated workforce was necessary. The 1926 Act would provide for native governments an important prop in the push towards cultural independence which it was hoped would put the coping-stone on the political independence achieved in 1922. Further, it would be an instrument to educate the farmers of the future and to provide a competent workforce which would be able to capitalise on the coming-on-stream of the Shannon Scheme. It was indeed an irony that these high economic hopes were dashed by the world recession at the start of the thirties and by the Economic War with Britain.

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Acknowledgement

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Irish Educational Studies, Vol.6, No.2, 198

THE EDUCATION STATE, THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF UNIONIST DOMINATION: THE CASE OF MANAGING POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN A UNIONIST BOROUGH 1977-1984

Robert Leslie Caul

The area of study is situated north-east of Belfast and forms a central element in what Nelson calls the industrial heartland of Ulster Loyalism.[1] Fifty per cent of the insured employed male population work in industrial firms.[2] This area is central to understanding new forms of unionist cultural domination as it was the first area to be reconstructed in the 1960s by a unionist government as a model of modernisation, industrial development and new housing. It has been transformed in the last decade by two simultaneous events; the closure of the new continuous process industries and the emergence of new forms of social movement in the quest to re-establish sectarian domination. This paper looks at the unionist community in probably one of its purest forms in Nothern Ireland. It attempts to analyse how unionist domination contains self-contradictory forms of domination in that the dominant Protestant working class unquestionably continues to be dominated by agencies of the state. This paper presents a case study of managing secondary schools in an industrial culture which attempts to illustrate and discuss, through schooling, some of the processes of the reproduction of cultural domination divorced from a class base.

Pierre Bourdieu's[3] attempts to explain the reproduction of industrial culture in the form of labour power are built on the assumption that social class structures are maintained and legitimised by symbolic violence and that symbolic power misconceives class relationships as fair and natural within a social system which reproduces inequality. He sees education as a process of symbolic violence dependent on class and cultural domination which reproduces itself through the reproduction of the hierarchial distribution of cultural capital in the curriculum of schools. In this study the education system reproduces cultural capital as it reinforces and perpetuates religious differences around those of social class, but compounded by it, and the resulting structure is perceived as fair and justified. Bourdieu suggests that dominant symbolic systems are produced, distributed and consumed within the social relationahips of the school and are relatively autonomous of other systems which produce other forms of capital.

Willis has argued that social class relationships in capitalism are mobile and influenced by the subjective meanings attributed to them within different classes.[4] The cultural setting of pupils in schools has to be observed outside the school in the labour market, sexism and in the ideology pervading their environment. The process of cultural accommodation involved in real learning about life and work is most often class based and is a form of resistance and struggle amongst working class children against middle class domination. Because of this resistance state institutions, including education, cannot be seen as simply the preserve of the ruling class and as one element in the reproduction of society in its own image.

In his study Jenkins[5] examined the process of cultural reproduction and resistance to it in a very large estate within the area covered by this investigation. Pupils who lived there were divided into three social groups according to their perspective of schooling, which are largely dictated by academic attainment and thus with social class. Halsey and Gardner in 1952 and Douglas in 1964[6] have demonstrated that social class is an important predictor of performance in the education system. This has particular relevance in a selective system such as prevails in Northern Ireland. Jenkins identified his pupils within the constraints of that system into grammar school pupils who were highly motivated and 'respectable', ordinary 'kids' who attended one of the two local secondary intermediate schools and the 'lads' who were anti-social and close to criminal and para-military groups. Jenkins has demonstrated how this system does represent a form of symbolic violence in Bourdieu's terms which fosters the maintenance of the class system. Segregation, he argues, also provides and reinforces the resistance of working class cultural accommodation to middle class culture. The mechanisms of the social system are those of matching expectation with achievement in school.

The education system evident in the borough was determined by the 1947 Education Act which provides the legal framework for schooling in Northern Ireland. Since Castells[7] has argued that urban areas must be understood in terms of the events and conditions of the people who live there, and the forms and patterns of their living space, then education, its structures and outcomes which affect the lives of all the young people, must be an important variable. It is necessary then to study the school system and to examine further the form of segregation and its effects on the structures and curriculum of the separate sectors. Following Bourdieu and Willis this may provide insights into the reproduction of cultural capital within not only the area under study but Northern Ireland as a whole.

Selective secondary education does provide a relatively safe route to examination success for about 30 per cent of the pupils at school in Northern Ireland. The majority of children, however, come from just those backgrounds that have been identified as being associated with lower achievement at school. In the study most of the children in schools come from less well-off homes and working class localities. It has already been indicated that such structural divisions in the system as selection are strategically important in the reproduction of cultural identities. If structural change was initiated it would be important to study whether the change would make education more equal, if not more just.

The state in Northern Ireland has worked through the process of education and in particular has used 'selection' as a means of control and socialisation. The voluntary grammar school and the places it provides for 'selected' children was and is a most important contributor to this process. It divorces bright working class children from their roots and incorporates them within the state, which has robbed the working class of their natural leaders and has allowed the collectivisation of those rejected by the system as unsuitable for grammar school education and who have had to be provided for within the secondary intermediate sector. During the 1960's social movements throughout Europe were questioning the role of the state in education and in Northern Ireland the Burgess Committee[8] was set up to investigate selection at eleven years of age. This committee reported in 1969. The majority report recommended the abolition of selection at eleven but a minority report, significantly signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and the Senior Chief Inspector, supported the continuance of selection. The state through central government did nothing to implement the majority recommendation but did through some local authorities who introduced comprehensive schools in appropriate areas. The only structured attempt to provide an integrated system was made in the Craigavon area where the Dickson Plan was introduced and is still the basis for secondary education (including grammar schools) in that area.[9]

At this time a re-organisation of post-primary education was approved in princple by the relevant County Education Committee for the schools in the area under consideration. A local High school was to close and the buildings and staff were to become a newly constituted 'Sixth Form College', to which pupils of sixth form age from all schools in the locality would go. The area was appropriate for such a deviation from the normal selection pattern as its expanding population was creating a need for new schools. The County Education Committee accepted the scheme proposed by the Director of Education and a series of public meetings to discuss and explain what was proposed was arranged. The chairman of the County Committee was also the chairman of the Management Committee of the High school concerned.

In November 1967 a meeting of parents violently opposed the scheme on the grounds that it was disadvantageous to their children. They argued that their children would not have access to grammar school education whereas other children in the borough for whom access to Belfast was easier would retain that opportunity. The confrontation was highly personalised and the Director of Education was challenged directly as to the school his children attended.

> I ask you again. What school do your children attend, a comprehensive college....? (This college was a private grammar school in the English tradition in Belfast.)

The solidarity presented by the parents was based on their belief in a system in which selection was organised around a concept of 'ability'. They argued that if many of the children did not warrant a grammar school place anyway, why should their children be denied that opportunity while others of the same ability retained it because they had access to schools outside the area. Clear 'us' and 'them' formulations shaped the arguments and supported the principle of a system of schools segregated by ability as measured at eleven. As far as the parents were concerned selection must continue and indeed the scheme for re-organising post-primary education was dropped. The legitimacy of the arguments in terms of class or representation was not questioned. The Director was reported by a member of the Education Committee as saying to that Committee, in abandoning the plan:

> If parents do not want it (the plan) there is no earthly reason to proceed.

Nevertheless, the case against selection has continued to be articulated since then and many groups, including the main teacher unions: the Ulster Teachers' Union, the National Association of Schoolmasters and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, have argued forcefully against selection and pointed to schools which claim comprehensive status, such as Fivemiletown and Kilkeel, as examples of 'good schools'. All the political parties, with the exception of the Unionist party, favour comprehensive schooling. However, the eruption of street violence in Belfast and Londonderry in 1969, and the beginnings of yet another episode in overt confrontation between the sectarian blocs in Northern Ireland, created a situation in which the state was consumed by the need for social control in order to ensure the continuance of the state. Questions such as the legitimacy of selection in education were low in priority in face of the need to survive. Socialisation through elements of consumption such as education would appear to have validity only in situations where the state itself is not seen as under threat. Thus the question of secondary schooling was not addressed for some years and the status quo remained.

When Direct Rule was introduced under a labour government in 1974 the administration announced in a consultative document its intention to end selection at eleven in Northern Ireland. To that end the Department of Education carried out a feasibility study under a Senior Chief Inspector and public debate began.

In the past the views of the County Education Committees normally prevailed with regard to education policy but on this occasion the views of the newly constituted Education and Library Boards, which replaced Education Committees in 1973, were strongly challenged by the Association of Governing Bodies who represented the 56 voluntary grammar schools. The inbuilt lack of legitimacy in the question of selection led the Education and Library Boards to seek consultation far beyond that normally recognised as necessary or useful in a local government framework. This abdication of authority by the state at local level permitted the issues being discussed to take on meanings of locality, access and prejudice. The middle class parents quickly organised themselves into a 'Parents Union'[10] which claimed to defend the "sacred grammar school from the masses". The state then had to regulate complex interrelations of class and sectarian division in the form of an 'educational debate'.

At the local level the Board organised consultation at three levels. Parents' groups, often semi-Parents' Union branches, school staffs and school management committees, met with officers and with the members of the Education and Library Board. A Reorganisation Co-ordinating Committee was established by the Board to draft a response to the consultative document. After consultation with all schools, the relevant Board agreed to educational change but only for what it called "educational reasons". Several members described state policy as 'educational vandalism'. The labour administration was unmoved by all the popular appeals articulated by the 'Parents' Union' and in November 1977 announced its intention to proceed with reorganisation and centrally organised working parties were arranged to deal with the administrative difficulties inherent in the change. On 24th October 1978 the Reorganisation Co-ordinating Committee proceeded with the second stage of the consultative procedure agreed at the December 1977 meeting in the area of study and another adjacent area. As a result public meetings were replaced by Officer/Governing Body/Management Committee meetings. The two areas involved were the Board's priority areas as rapidly expanding numbers in the primary sector had to be accommodated at post-primary level. The question of 'roofs over heads' was explicitly related to structural questions regarding the organisation of schools and where they were situated.

The question of reorganisation had been determined by central government but the implementation of the policy remained strongly localised. In the Board a majority of members supported retention of selection and of the grammar school system but found themselves in the position of one of the committee chairmen:

> It is government policy and we (the Education and Library Board) are bound by government policy. 11

The Chief Officer described the deliberations in the Board as 'kicking for touch'. The members did not seek and were given little educational guidance and they reformulated the issues of the character, shape and aims of the system in terms of local needs. For example, the severe overcrowding, and thus the extent of temporary provision at the designated High school, became an issue at the December 1978 meeting of the Reorganising Co-ordinating Committee and it was argued that it should be given the same consideration as another local grammar school, which was to be extended, had received.

> Can I ask the Chief Officer that if ... school is being given an extension, why is .... geing denied? Who is holding the scheme back? 12

This debate occurred within the context of reorganisation and reflected the competitive nature of the debate as members sought advantage for individual schools. Officers of the Board manoeuvred for space in the debate and the schools and their management committees formed alliances to protect their interests. Few groups made any contribution to the educational argument as most were opposed to government policy and the way to avoid confronting the issues it raised was by redefining it in local terms. Politics and the need to legitimate the system were irrelevant to what had become a struggle to defend 'our schools' by a highly organised and articulate middle class in the Parents' Union. The Board, and in particular the Reorganisation Co-ordinating Committee, were seen as agents of central government whose job it was to transfer the decision to the schools. The implementation of that decision was further delayed at the meeting of December 1978 when after discussion of the overcrowding problems of the school in question the Reorganisation Co-ordinating Committee moved that the school management committee should be asked their views on the 'new' role of the school. This was, the Committee believed, in accordance with a decision of a meeting of management committee members and the Management Advisory Committee on 6th December 1977 and minuted as follows:

> The Chief Officer gave a resume of the statement by Lord Melchett and the role of the Board's Reorganisation Committee in this respect. The Management Committee members were then invited to put forward their views on the subject but they felt that, as a new Committee, they would require further time for consultation with staff and parents as well as studying the various options. It was agreed that, having done so, they would inform the Advisory Committee of their views. 13

This decision was strengthened by reference to a minute from a meeting of the school Management Committee on 16th March 1978:

> In a general discussion on reorganisation, the Secretary reported that the staff had been holding a series of meetings but that any decisions depended on (i) the proposed transfer system from primary to secondary level and (ii) the catchment area for the school. The committee members agreed that these decisions would have to be resolved before any definite decision on the type of reorganisation in the area. 14

By March 1979 the Education and Library Board was asking the schools for comments on how they saw themselves in a reorganised situation. The local Parents' Union branches continued as defence committees and constant monitors of any threat to 'our schools'. At this time the Borough Council entered the debate and discussed a motion calling for the end of selection at eleven. At the March meeting of the Council the motion was referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee by the councillor who was also chairman of the school's Management Committee and a keen supporter of the school. At the Committee's meeting later that month the motion was carried by eleven votes to three. Although opposition was expressed to comprehensive schooling, this vote was interpreted and reported by the press as a vote for comprehensive education:

> "Council Votes for Comprehension"
>
> Headline in the local paper 15

and by the Reorganisation Co-ordinating Committee who recorded the following:

> It was noted that a notice of motion with regard to comprehensive education was before ... Borough Council 16
>
> Minute of meeting 24th March 1979

The recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee went to the Council on the last Monday in April 1979. The Parents' Union branch, strong because of its close links with the Government Bodies Association and the teaching staff of the school canvassed support widely for a reversal of the recommendation. At the meeting packed public galleries listened intently as local councillors defended schools against the possible ravages of an unselective system. Time and time again the proposers of the recommendation argued that they were against selection at eleven and wanted to see its removal from the system but that they were not advocates of large comprehensive schools. Privilege, grammar schools, academic standards and the Parents' Union won the struggle and the recommendation was rejected. The following extract from the minutes of that meeting demonstrates the difficulties some councillors had with the complexity of the argument. Under minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee a councillor raised the recommendation against selective schooling:

Unionist Councillor	I have a whole file of material on comprehensive schools. (Holds up a weighty file)
Labour Councillor	Who gave you it..? You wouldn't have the intelligence to get it yourself.

Unionist Councillor	The local bank manager - now he's an intelligent man.
Labour Councillor	Unlike you!
Unionist Councillor	He is interested in education (reading the file). Blackboard jungle. Schools too large. Truancy ... are we going to let this happen to our schools? I move that this resolution be thrown out ... where it belongs (public applause) into the gutter...
Labour Councillor	Now I have four children and they all went to ... (a local secondary intermediate school). One's a Brigadier in the Army, my oldest's a teacher ...
Another Unionist Councillor	Where's ... ? Free board and lodging .. on his holidays still!
Labour Councillor	The councillor may laugh, but I'm serious. It's no joke. We are talking about the future of kids and if we listen to Councillor ... all he wants is so that he can continue buy privilege for himself cronies.. Is that what we want? .... Privilege? [17]

The officers were working within the parameters set down by the Board who had agreed the range of options which were framed in such simple terms that the complex set of inter-relationships inherent in them were masked and the real meaning was not always apparent. For example, 'extension' did not mean more pupils at a school but permanent accommodation for the same number of pupils currently enrolled. The following interchange at one of te meetings demonstrates the difficulty:

> Oh! I see what ... means... an extension is a number of new buildings, not additional places for children
>
> Chairman of a local Primary School Committee[18]

These difficulties in defining the situation at each school grew as discussion, consultation and explanation continued, and many individuals gave up the struggle to understand. It became impossible for one individual member of any of the bodies to break away from the official definition of the situation, with the result that the conclusions of the local meetings often fitted 'official' views (i.e. Board views). The overt educational problem was that of selection at eleven in the locality but the questions addressed at local level were those of school buildings and permanent accommodation. The over-riding consideration was 'roofs over heads' and the legitimisation of the system or its functions in terms of educational process for all were neither considered nor advice sought on them.

The Parents' Union in their defence of the local grammar school, and the Borough Council, in its debate on the ending of selection, became immersed in the 'numbers and places' debate as areas lined up in the interests of local advantage. Two primary school management committees in a public authority estate of 3,400 houses voted against selection but the rest of the debate centred on the preservation of the existing provision and its extension to the advantage of the middle class interests in the area. A middle class dominated Education and Library Board, which between 1977/1981 was 90 per cent grammar school educated, found the reasons to fend off and slow down educational change compelling, while faint pleas from representatives of the working class for at least some consideration of change went unheeded. The Board officers became adept at using a switching frame of reference from educational to local in presenting business to the Board, so that the dominant interests prevailed on each occasion. Educational reasons to support the status quo were produced when local pressure demanded change and local opinion was sought when change was proposed on educational grounds. A conservative approach to education provision which initiated as little change as possible and retained existing forms of cultural and locality reproduction was continuing to be adopted.

Schools reflect the people in them and are characterised by their populations, not solely in terms of numbers but in the social values of the catchment area. Middle class Protestant areas have predominantly middle class Protestant schools. A similar relationship exists in all schools in terms of social class and religion in Northern Ireland. The relationship between social class and educational outcomes in the school system has led to the situation where schools become known in terms of perceived success and failure in education. The development of a selective and examination conscious system has led to aspirant, normally middle class, parents retaining control of access to middle class schools in middle class districts. Parents define 'good schools' as schools with middle class enrolments set in acceptable middle class environments as identified by the values and attitudes available to them in the context of their social system. Individual schools become sites of ideological struggles for advantage, access becomes the prerogative of the middle class and the struggle for social advantage ensures that this should be so. The working class are locked into a social world constrained by a bleak physical environment and have not available to them the concepts of right or access and equality of opportunity which would allow them to pursue any advantage in the struggle. This would seem to reflect Castell's notions of a dominant and a dominated class in that this study of the provision and management of schools has demonstrated how the system favours the 'select' few and how the system is stoutly defended by that 'few' and the rest must accept.

However, the acceptance of the system is only passive in the sense of its inevitability but not in the state of uncertainty and mistrust in which it exists. These feelings create a need for mutual support within the dominated class which transcends all other divisions in society. It is within this context that the social order in Northern Ireland is reproduced in an unstable environment. While the case study used to examine educational provision and to illustrate the complexities of this provision within the existing social order has been taken from the controlled sector (since access to information is less constrained in this sector), there is visable evidence in the physical location of maintained schools and in their school populations to suggest that the same set of dynamics are at work in that sector.

In the locality of study working class children have had little opportunity for social mobility dependent on the educational system and in particular on the provision of good schools. In the days after borough status was conferred on the area and when it was an expanding area of development, the state was apparently unable to provide schools even on a 'roofs over heads' basis. There was chronic under-provision of permanent school places, particularly in the rapidly developing housing estates both public and private, over the years. Ironically it was these same areas which were disadvantaged as school numbers declined dramatically and from chronic under-provision the system moved to acute over-provision and the consequent problems of sustaining a broad curriculum as teacher numbers declined in proportion to the pupil number decline. So acute was the problem that science and modern languages disappeared from the curriculum in both controlled and maintained secondary schools in one of the largest housing estates. While the physical provision of schools and the struggle to maintain middle class advantage in such provision echoes the ideas of Castells[19] of a dominated and dominant class, what happened within those schools can be explained by Willis's notions of cultural reproduction. The physical environment, home background, peer group and school are unified in a cultural net reflecting the apathy and fatalism of the social order of things. Schools do not write scripts on neutral children; they are a living part of that complex social order and Wilkey, an 18 year-old resident of a housing estate, was able to verbalise that part using the symbols and concepts of his dominated class and of his own vulnerability when he strayed outside it:

> Basically the whole community were much more close knit ... (Primary School) the only thing that sticks in my mind is a certain teacher in P6 who was a right old bastard, he had a real thing against me ... (Secondary School). For some reason I started to take an interest in the school work and at this time I really felt happy. I even started to do my homework... When things were beginning to get difficult I began to get frightened. I was happy being in the lowest class where nobody would rival me, never mind surpass me. At the beginning of fourth year I decided not to do exams and was put into the lowest class again. Basically this class, up until leaving were forgotten about. They more or less could do what they wanted ... 20

The reproduction of social and cultural hegemony as illustrated occurs within a structure reinforced by a set of administrative principles. The passive acceptance of the bureaucracy and its right to govern locks in social values.

> We'd've rather got caned or a clout on the head than do a load of lines or be kept in after school. A couple of slaps, for fuck's sake, that's nothing compared to what your da gives you. There's one time, I can't remember what it was for, probably raking in school, my da was sent

> for. He comes up and he says, 'Anytime you'se feel this lad needs a beating, it doesn't matter, whack him, do anything with him.' and the teacher said 'Fair enough' (Secondary school) It was good. 21

When such social values are trapped they become associated with sectarian values. A conservative unionist working class means a sectarian grouping who learn to accept no change at any price and to articulate their right to demand the same.

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EDUCATION FOR WORK

M. C. Geraghty

It is generally speaking taken as axiomatic that education should, among other things, prepare pupils for work. In a time of increasingly high unemployment this issue of education for work becomes more pressing. Parents expect schools to do something, society expects it, politicians expect it. In a leading article in The Irish Times, December 27, 1985 we read: "If we want work for our children in Ireland of the future we must not stint in educational investment". But what can education do? Mary Warnock[1] in her book Education: A Way Ahead says:

> if unemployment is really endemic, and I do not deny that it may be, then the competition for what jobs there are will be even more severe than it is now. Schools will therefore have all the greater obligation to their pupils to prepare them to get the jobs that exist. They may, it is true, be preparing them not so much for work as for the competition to work

- a bleak prospect indeed for those who do not win the prize of paid employment. Has education at the end of the twentieth century nothing better to offer our children than cut-throat competition for all so that a few may gain rewards? I hope, in this paper to suggest that education has indeed something to offer - something that up to now a majority of our schools have largely neglected - that is an education in intelligent creative, productive manual work for all children. I deliberately use the word manual-work rather than technology or any other word with a late twentieth century ring to it. I am talking specifically about the school subjects: woodwork, metalwork, cookery, needlework, horticulture - and perhaps others similar that I have unwittingly left out.

In a recent paper Work and Human Essence[2] Robin Attfield argues that work constitutes the exercise of an essential human capacity the development of which is necessary to human well being, and he goes on to argue that because for most people work is equated with paid employment it is the duty of governments to provide full employment. I agree with his premise but find his conclusion unconvincing. All the existing evidence in the Western world points to increased unemployment. The technological revolution has, in one sense been too successful. Work that in the past demanded the labour of hundreds of pairs of hands can now be done by one machine. This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. It is difficult to envisage any Western Government willing to reverse the trend. Perhaps we should not expect them to do so.

To work is part of what it is to be human. Individuals are defined by their work. It proclaims to others what is their preferred way of life. If this is so, and I believe it is, how are we as educators to respond to the challenge that such a view presents. The present response takes a number of forms - a call to make education more relevant, a call for more vocational training and a call to give school children work-experience. All of these, I would argue, are of limited value. The call for relevance is rarely more than a slogan - a "rallying symbol" to use Scheffler's description.[3] It is useless as a guide for the curriculum planner or classroom teacher as to what should be done. The danger with vocational training is two-fold; firstly the danger of dictating the future instead of preparing for it and secondly of providing too narrow and specific a training so that instead of liberating the child we are trapping him. The third response - the provision of work-experience is again of questionable value: it depends on the quality of the work and the depth of the experience. It is, for example, difficult to see how experience of routine assembly-line work is in any deep sense educational. At least some work-experience is of this nature.

As educators we need to do some radical thinking. Perhaps we might begin by considering some of the insights of the past and attempt to apply them to the present situation. Let us begin by looking at the polarisation of intellectual work versus manual work which is the basis of most class distinction and is reflected in much of our education, where academic subjects are considered suitable for the brighter child and practical subjects suitable only for those not academically gifted. This attitude towards manual work probably had its origin in classical Greek Philosophy. Aristotle had this to say[4] "In the ideal state ... the citizens must not lead the life of mechanics or tradesmen which is ignoble and far from conducive to virtue". For the citizen of Aristotle's time the life of a gentleman was seen as a life of leisure - but leisure was not a matter of idleness but rather of contemplation and participation in the running of the state. All manual work was done by slaves who had no leisure. It is difficult to see how any Christian - or humanist for that matter, could accept the idea of the work of slaves as being justified by the contemplation of the few. There is indeed a long tradition of educational, philosophic and religious writing in praise of the value of manual work.

St. Benedict the founder of monasticism proclaimed the then revolutionary idea that manual work was a necessary instrument of virtue and a means towards a right sort of life.[5] The Benedictine motto Laborare est orare - to work is to pray acknowledges the spiritual value of work. The Buddist attitude is somewhat similar. Schummacker[6] says:

> The Buddist point of view takes the function of work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilise and develop his faculties to enable him to overcome his ego centredness by joining with other people in a common task and to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence.

William Morris[7] has this to say:

> ... for all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies ... But a man at work making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and with it is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hand; and as part of the human race he creates.

Have we perhaps, in our education, ignored this important aspect of our humanity; the value of manual work. Jacob Bronowski[8] speaks of his excitement in studying the fossil remains of our distant ancestors.

> I was totally committed, he says, to thinking about what makes man what he is... How did he come to be the kind of man that I honour: dextrous, observant, thoughtful, passionate.

Note that heading the list of qualities that constitute our essential humanity he places dexterity. Again he writes:[9]

> The evolution of the brain, of the hand, of the eye .. of the whole human frame make a mosaic of special gifts.

And again:

> he has what no other animal possesses
> a jigsaw of faculties which alone make
> him creative ...
>
> Every animal leaves traces of what it
> was, man alone leaves traces of what
> he has created.

Now it is strange that a child can go through the whole of his schooling leaving undeveloped one important aspect of his humanity - the creative use of his hands in manual work. What I am trying to do in this paper is to examine how we might interpret education for work as in part a way of redressing the balance by educating our children to develop this valuable aspect of their humanity.

During the past twenty years there have been a number of important writings on the philosophic basis of curriculum. They have addressed themselves to the question - what should be on the school curriculum. Perhaps the most influential of these was Paul Hirst[10] in that a number of Philosophers of Education seem to derive their theories of curriculum from his. Central to this liberal tradition is the emphasis it places on the development of rational mind through the traditional academic subjects. Little or no justification is given for the inclusion of practical subjects on the curriculum for all children.

Patrick Walsh[11] in his paper The Upgrading of Practical Subjects addresses himself to this problem and comes up with a strong argument in favour of inclusion of practical subjects. The subjects he refers to are those the value of which I also am attempting to advocate. He argues quite cogently that the claim that academic subjects are worth pursuing for their own sake can with equal validity be made for practical subjects. He does this by teasing out the concept of knowledge for its own sake and finds that it is equally applicable to practical and academic subjects.

Another philosopher who has something valuable to say in this respect is Francis Dunlop[12] in his paper The Education of the Emotions. About the scope of the curriculum he writes

> ... but whereas Hirst puts the emphasis on equipping a person with concepts and forms of argument, I would rather talk about the idea of introducing him to suitable objects (that is realities) from all the major areas of human concern and interest. These will include material objects and raw materials (natural, man-made and modified for human use) living things (vegetable and animal), persons (both present and past) ... 'ideal' objects (especially mathematical objects, languages and scientific theories) ... techniques and skills (of, for example, scientific investigation, art and craft).

Now, it seems to me that Walsh and Dunlop do more justice to the idea of the education of the whole person than do Hirst and his followers.

We are not disembodied intelligences, we are physical beings subject to the same necessities as the rest of the living world. We need food and shelter and warmth. We die. Perhaps our education should reflect this. The writings of Simone Weil[13] are worth pursuing in this respect. Camus did much to secure the publication of her works and once said that any renewal of European life would have to take her insights into account. She argued for the redemptive effects of manual labour and the need for both contemplation and work in any fully human life. The idea of seeing some human beings as fit only for labour she saw as inimical. "Nothing", she wrote, "can ever justify the assumption that any man whoever he may be has been deprived of this power" (i.e. contemplation) and again "The reality of this world is necessity. The part of man which is in this world is the part which is in bondage to necessity and subject to need".

For her as for St. Benedict manual work and contemplation are intrinsically complementary. The pain and toil that are always more or less associated with manual work were for her unsurpassed as means by which the necessity (and therefore the ordered beauty) of the world might bite into the soul.[15]

A somewhat similar view is expressed by John Ruskin.[16] He writes

> In ... labour, and in the relations which it establishes between us and the lower animals, are founded the conditions of our highest faculties; and without that labour, neither reason, art, or peace, are possible to man.

Again, speaking of intellectual and manual work he writes[17]

> We are always in these days endeavouring to separate the two. We want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working and we call one a gentleman and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought to be thinking and the thinker ought to be working, and both should be gentlemen - in the best sense. As it is we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising his brother; and the mass of society is made up of morbid thinkers and miserable workers. Now it is only by thought that labour is made happy, and only by labour that thought is made healthy and the two cannot be separated with impunity.

What practical lessons can we derive from all this? We are educators. Education is a practical activity and we must ask and attempt to answer the question: what is to be done? I would tentatively suggest four possible lines of action all of them educational but all of them needing political will for implementation.

1) If we really want to advocate the education of the whole person - intellectual, physical, spiritual - then I do not see how we can do other than insist that every child of whatever ability gets an education in one or more of the practical subjects. Such a child will in one valuable sense at least be educated for work - whether that work is for himself or for the community.

In doing this we must, as educators, attempt to give the practical subjects their proper due and dignity. There have been claims of late that some of the practical subjects have been upgraded - they have been allowed to count in the points system. Their names have been changed, their syllabi updated. I find these claims unconvincing; such upgrading may turn out on examination to be a further downgrading of what is really valuable in them - that is their practical content. They are not valuable merely because they generate theory - though, of course, all of them have a necessary theoretical underpinning. But in making them more and more theoretical are we not in danger of capitulating to administrative expedience. For examination purposes it is easier to assess written work. There is a danger of trying to produce an elaborate and unnecessary theoretical underpinning to give the subjects a spurious academic respectability which they do not need. If an inordinate amount of time is spent on theory in an area that is essentially practical something is seriously wrong. I suggest that one should view with caution all academic awards for practical subjects.

2) Perhaps we might make available the excellent facilities of our schools for the unemployed so that those who through mis-education have never learned to use their hands intelligently, imaginatively, creatively might be given the opportunity to do so. We tend to view with

suspicion all rigid streaming of children by academic ability but accept unquestioningly the categorisation of pupils by chronological age. Perhaps we should reexamine our views on this. Perhaps all our schools should be community schools in all senses.

3) There is the custom in some schools and colleges in other countries (and possibly some here) of appointing resident artists,writers, poets. Why not appoint resident craftsmen or women? I can think of no better way to introduce pupils to the world of work than to give them an opportunity to observe and work beside a dedicated, skilled craftsman or woman.

4) What is available for our unemployed to occupy their time? The dole, television, videos and possibly leisure centres - in other words an updated version of bread and circuses. Can we, at the end of the twentieth century do no better? Perhaps instead of or as well as leisure centres we ought to have work centres where people of different ages and backgrounds could work together at work they themselves had chosen. Some would be unemployed, others might be engaged part-time in boring dull repetitive work, some might be academics and those whose professional work failed to provide full expression for an important facet of their humanity. One could envisage such centres being equipped with low or intermediate technology equipment. As well as such centres perhaps the land that now lies waste might be made available as allotments so that young people - and others who had learned horticulture would now have the opportunity to practice it. Horticultural and craft advisors might be available in every community. The schools might have a service to offer here, also.

I have omitted one important element in all this - that is the (non-educational) problem of the distribution of wealth in a technological society. If machines rather than human hands produce the wealth what is to happen to people? The Deserted Village comes to mind.

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
> where wealth accumulates, and men decay. [18]

Perhaps the whole concept of dole or social security or whatever we wish to call it should become obsolete, and instead every citizen of the state be considered to have the right to a just and dignified share of the national wealth and in return for this be expected to give a number of hours of community service.

Ruskin[19] speaking more than a hundred years ago said:

> We must not when our strong hands are thrown out of work look wildly about for want of something to do with them. If ever we feel that want, it is a sign that all our household is out of order.

Out of order indeed!
Again he says[20]

> You complain of the difficulty of finding work for your men. Depend upon it the real difficulty rather is to find men for your work.

If we look around our beautiful country we cannot but see that there is plenty of work to be done. Consider the amount of squalor in any of our towns or cities. Look at our countryside - fields swampy and weed-filled, hedges and fences neglected, broken gates, barbed wire, growing heaps of rubbish by our roadsides, polluted streams, rivers, lakes and say to ourselves what J. Ruskein[21] said in England more than a hundred years ago:

> Look around this island of yours and see what you have to do in it.

One final point. It is claimed by many that manual work has become obsolete. If what I have been saying in this paper is true - and I believe it is, this is tantamount to claiming that human beings have become obsolete - a claim with which an educator could scarcely concur. I am arguing that we and our children, through manual work, learn to cooperate on a human level with the environment of which we are a living part. This cooperation is capable of engendering love and respect and this love and respect may be our only bulwark against the arrogant destructiveness of much advanced technology which seems to have as its aim the exploitation, control, domination, and ultimately the destruction of our world and everything in it.

SUMMARY

I began by accepting the premise that work is part of human essence and then examined the implications of this for educators. I posed and attempted to answer the question: what can we do to ensure that our pupils can, through work, achieve their full humanity?

I concentrated on an evaluation of manual work as an essential human activity and suggested that we have much to learn from some valuable insights from the past. I made three practical suggestions - two relating directly to schooling, one indirectly, but all of them emphasising the value of work for all.

They are:

(1) That all children study at least one practical subject - and that such subjects be taken seriously.

(2) That school facilities in practical areas be made available for the community at large including the unemployed.

(3) That work centres be set up in each community - the schools acting in an advisory capacity.

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THE LAST BARRICADE - SOME REFLECTIONS ON ETHOS IN POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Michael O'Donovan

Any person who has made a habit in recent years of a casual perusal of newspaper items on educational matters might be forgiven for believing that a major debate was underway on the question of school ethos in Ireland. Such a conclusion would, I suggest, be incorrect.

School ethos has certainly been in the news. The court judgements on the New Ross dismissal case,[1] for example, have drawn attention to the conflict between the claim of some school authorities in insisting that the lifestyle of the individual teacher be in keeping with the values being promoted by the school authorities and the claim, on the other hand, of a teacher to have a private life and to act in accordance with private conscience. The issuing of guidelines on the hiring of national teachers in November/December 1985 has drawn attention to a similar conflict at primary level.

Such incidents, and the proliferation of opposing statements which accompany them do not, however, constitute educational debate. What we actually have is a series of pronouncements, a firing of broadsides from behind entrenched positions. Real dialogue on the question of school ethos is little in evidence and, by and large, practicing teachers prefer not to comment publicly on the issue.

If we see ethos as involving the distinguishing cultural characteristics of the school, the atmosphere of the school, and the guiding beliefs of the school, then it is clear that several types of ethos can co-exist in a post-primary school, and that a number of factors can contribute to the totality of the school ethos.

In recent years, however, there seems to have been a concentration on one aspect of this question. The religious authorities who own and manage many second-level schools in Ireland appear to wish to maintain and strengthen in their schools an ethos which is both denominational and custodial, and in this they would seem to have the support of the courts.

The custodial conception of school ethos has tradition on its side in Ireland. It takes the school manager as the custodian of values and beliefs which must be transmitted to the adolescents who are entrusted to his or her care. It would seem as if the school is viewed as a barricade against values and beliefs at odds with those approved by the school authorities.

As far as this affects teachers, the custodial ethos will place great emphasis on the conformance of teachers in working and in personal life to the views of the school authorities.

The word "conformance" here is quite deliberately chosen. In the Costello judgement on the New Ross dismissal case mentioned earlier, it was upheld that "... the requirement of religious conformance ... is reasonably necessary to assure the achievement of the objectives of the school".[2] The guidelines for the appointment of principals of Catholic primary schools, published in February 1985 ask that candidates "be exemplary in carrying out religious duties; be a model to the community at large".[3]

There will be a stress, therefore, on outward appearances, on carrying out the public manifestations of religious conviction. Accordingly many new entrants to the teaching profession may be wary of questions which seem directly or indirectly calculated to elicit information about their religious beliefs.

It is arguable if such a situation is really to the liking of many school managers. Can any mature adult feel comfortable peering uninvited into the private affairs of another person?

The efforts of some school authorities to reinforce the custodial conception of school ethos may be seen to spring from fears that an end to that type of ethos might eventually lead to schools which are un-Christian and somehow value-neutral, though it is difficult to see how any school can be value-neutral. Such fears must be acknowledged and taken into account in any debate on the question of school ethos.

In this paper, the benefit of the custodial notion of ethos to young people who are shortly to enter the adult world will be questioned. It will be advanced that this type of ethos will become progressively untenable in practice, and, furthermore, that it will be possible to build a type of school ethos which can be profoundly Christian but not custodial, which will emphasise the critical sharpening of awareness and which will help the student unveil his world, including his religious tradition which is an important part of that world.

Reference was made earlier to a custodial conception of ethos as being traditional in Ireland. Up to the late 1950's, Irish voluntary secondary schools had a particular religious atmosphere. This did not have to be prescribed. It arose naturally because of the many members of religious orders who staffed the schools. The expansion of post-primary education in the 1960's and the shift in balance between lay and religious teachers meant that a greater diversity of views, of ways of teaching, of attitudes to life were now present among teaching staff. The officialy prescribed aims of the school might not have changed but the day-to-day characteristic atmosphere certainly did.

This change in ethos was helped by a more questioning attitude to authority on the part of teenagers and perhaps on the part of young teachers.

More recently, however, it would seem that efforts are being made to return to the earlier situation. The conformance of teachers to the ethos which some school authorities may seek to impose will become progressively unenforceable. The number of religious in the secondary schools is declining, and more importantly, an increasing proportion of religious want to be teachers rather than managers, and may not wish to be cast in the role of moral guardians of the staffroom. An over-reliance on contract, on the letter of the law, is doomed to failure because so many factors make enforcement impossible, and what Lortie terms the "cellular isolation"[4] of teaching gives the teacher a great deal of independence in the classroom.

Furthermore, we now live in a type of society which makes it well nigh impossible for the school to function as a barricade against unwanted ideas. To take a single example, multi-channel television and the home video machine mean that the exposure of the adolescent to values and to lifestyles is very largely outside the control of the school or even of the state; and the advent of the satellite miniature receiver dish may well put an end to what's left of censorship within a few years. Since adolescents cannot be shielded from unapproved ideas, does it not make more sense to face and to examine these issues in the secondary school.

It must be stressed that if there is an association in Irish minds between religious management and the custodial conception of ethos, then this has come about as a result of history. A custodial conception of ethos is also associated with schooling in the Soviet Union, for example, where it would appear that the Marxist-Leninist worldview is constantly promoted and where supposedly harmful influences such as George Orwell's Animal Farm are censored out.

Recent statements on school ethos in Ireland have tended to look into questions of the extent to which religious or denominational values are promoted by the school. It may be useful to think in other terms also; perhaps to use terms like "educationally healthy" and "educationally unhealthy". Under these headings we might consider the extent to which a spirit of competition pervades the post-primary school. Students, parents and teachers know that examinations play a vital role in the way society distributes its rewards. Does a concentration on examination success mean that other educationally important activities may be squeezed out.

We might also consider contradictions between the officially prescribed aims of a school and what actually develops. The charging of fees in some post-primary schools and the rejection through entrance tests of less able children may lead us to ask if elitism is not the dominant cultural characteristic of such schools.

Perhaps the crucial question is whether the traditional custodial notion of school ethos, and the conformance it may seek to impose on teachers, is beneficial from the point of view of students moving through adolescence, young adults whose moral and intellectual development is entrusted, in part, to the post-primary school.

We might, for example, in a particular school, find agreement among parents, teachers and school authorities that one of the objectives of the school is to bring students to an understanding of what the Christian message really means. A custodial type of ethos, however, may actually serve to block off students from such an understanding. If real debate is lacking, students can be "processed" through the system without the opportunity to search out the contradictions in the value systems being presented to them, and perhaps without the opportunity for honest discussions with teachers of schoolmates on these issues. Can such education hope to bring a person to a position where he/she can say: "I have had doubts. I have worked through these doubts and though uncertainties remain, the words of Jesus speak to me in a real way, and this will help me to shape my life"? Can teachers who must maintain a discrete silence, a "conformance" as Justice Costello would have it, really help young people to grow in this way.

It is not intended that this paper should provide a resolution of the problems connected with school ethos in Irish post-primary education, but some suggestions or pointers are offered.

In a very tentative manner, the work of Freire is looked at in the hope that it will provide us with some signposts to a new conception of ethos, one which may win the broad support of teachers, parents and school authorities. Any reference to Freire's work in relation to Irish eduation must be a tentative one, as his writings have grown from his experience in Brazil and in Africa. Henry Giroux comments positively on Freire's work, but warns against attempts "to impose Freire's methodology like a grid upon a vastly different socio-political cultural experience".[5]

Nevertheless, Paulo Freire's work is chosen as a starting point here because it has gained the respect of educationalists across the political and religious spectra. Some will respond to the profoundly Christian spirit in his writing and will link it with the liberation theology which grew from the Latin American Bishops' Conference in 1968. Others will respond to a spirit which draws inspiration from figures of the revolutionary left. The man himself is admired, because in his life and work, he has fashioned a radical pedagogy which works with the people of the developing countries in the interest of their own personal liberation, and their liberation from the oppressive economic and political structures outside the school.

Let us, therefore, briefly consider Freire's notion of "concientizacao" - concientization[6] - which I'll translate as the sharpening of critical awareness, and ask whether this notion may contribute to a common understanding of school ethos.

Conscientizacao, or the sharpening of critical awareness, is, according to Freire, "a permanent critical approach to reality",[7] and he contends that this action reflection upon the world is essential for the fulfilment of man's "ontological vocation to be more fully human",[8] Man alone is able to look at his world and at objective reality from a distance. If we agree that this is so, then Freire's notion of concientizacao in education may have universal applicability.

Central to this sharpening of awareness is dialogue, and therefore an ethos arising from the spirit of concientizacao must involve dialogue, and teachers and students must be partners in that dialogue. They will not be equal partners. The teacher has the central place in classroom interaction, but as sutdents move through the post-primary system, they must be given a great opportunity, indeed a systematic opportunity, to come to their own decisions about values and beliefs - this implies the opportunity to see all the evidence and to hear differing viewpoints.

The participants in dialogue must, however, bring to the encounter "their anxieties, doubts, hopes or hopelessness".[9] The emphasis in this type of ethos is on the integrity and on the professionalism rather than on the conformance of the teacher.

In such circumstances, a teacher who would deliberately and consistently attempt to undermine the religious beliefs of a student would be guilty of malpractice; a teacher whose domestic situation was irregular, or who had genuine doubts about certain church teachings would not be seen primarily as a target for censure.

From a very practical viewpoint, then how might the confidence of parents be won for the building up of a more complete and more fruitful ethos, one based on helping sutdents discover their own identity, develop confidence in themselves, discover their interests and talents and build good personal relationships?

This can be done in part by bringing parents into contact with and involving parents with initiatives which demonstrate the efforts of the school on behalf of the students. The school art exhibition is a typical example. Here, in a pleasant social atmosphere, with tea and chat, parents, students and teachers can enjoy seeing the year's work attractively presented. Well-planned trips to the Gaeltacht would involve teachers working in co-operation with students and parents in a special atmosphere or ethos which would be of benefit in subsequent relationships inside and outside class. A greater involvement of students wherever possible in responsible research work in their subjects would also be important for the development of independent critical thinking. Greater use of drama, perhaps with an eye to performance, again builds a special atmosphere and may enable students who are academically weak to shine in other ways.

On such occasions, the confidence of parents in the way-of-life of the school and in the teachers will be won, not by a feeling that the lifestyle of each teacher is impeccable, but by the knowledge that the skills and energies of teachers are directed in a professional and dedicated way to the educational development of the students.

There is a need for a dialogue on school ethos in Ireland and in that dialogue it will be as important to listen to opposing views as to speak one's own. The good faith of those putting forward their ideas and proposals must be accepted; otherwise practicing teachers will not participate. At present many feel that this is a topic they must avoid lest they arouse suspicion. Hopefully, these brief reflections on ethos in post-primary education may contribute to that dialogue.

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NURSERY EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Ian F. Wells

1. Background to the Enquiry

This paper is based on the findings of a research project which set out to take evidence from all nursery teachers in Northern Ireland and from the principals of Northern Ireland primary schools who have responsibility for nursery units. The teachers were asked about the current state of nursery provision and what is needed for the future. They provided factual evidence about nursery schooling, together with their views on the adequacy of provision. Detailed descriptions of the findings are given in Wells and Burke.[1] A summary of the findings and an examination of the issues which these raise are provided in a shorter report, Wells and Burke.[2]

The survey was conducted as part of the Research and Consultancy Service whereby NICER researchers collaborate with educationists in projects of the educationists' choice. This enquiry was requested by the Primary Teachers' Council, a forum of the teachers' unions for the discussion of professional matters. Though questionnaires were returned to NICER to ensure confidentiality of individual submissions, these questionnaires had been circulated by the Primary Teachers' Council. The questionannaires were lengthy and detailed, examining many aspects of nursery provision, but they were returned by 85 per cent of nursery teachers and primary principals. These submissions were of considerable length and they yielded detailed evidence on a wide range of subject-matter. In this paper, a selection is made from the findings and this evidence is examined for the issues which it raises.

2. Nursery Places - Supply and Demand

In 1974, it was stated[3] that "the aim of (Government) policy is to provide nursery education for all three and four-year old children whose parents wish them to have it." From the nursery teachers' returns, it was estimated that there were places for almost 6,900 children. In 1985, there were some 53,800 three- and four-year-olds in Northern Ireland. Eleven years after this statement of government policy, there were places for almost 13 per cent of children of nursery school age.

The teachers were asked to give the numbers of children who were on the waiting-list for admission to each school or unit, and to estimate the numbers who could not even be placed on the waiting-list. The average size of waiting-list for each nursery was 75 children. The length of individual lists varied considerably, one unit having one child and another having 386 on the list. Whereas a quarter of the nurseries had less than 40 names on the waiting-list, another quarter had more than 95 children who awaited admission. In addition, some 19 children on average could not even be entered on each waiting-list. If there was such a thing as a 'typical' waiting-list for admission to each nursery, it consisted for almost 100 names.

There was a clear imbalance between supply and demand. On the one hand, 28 per cent of the nurseries contained a single class and accommodated 25 children each. The other 72 per cent of nurseries had double classes, providing for twice the number of children in each nursery. Against this, there was an average demand for almost 100 places for children younger than three years of age. Within the catchment area of each nursery, places could have been filled and re-filled. The geographical pattern of provision was such that nursery provision was largely concentrated in the urban areas, in particular in Belfast, Londonderry, Craigavon and Newtownabbey. Even where nursery provision was available, it did not meet the levels of parental demand.

It may be argued that two factors mask the severity of under-provision. Firstly, the waiting-lists were long, but these may still be under-estimates if parents' wishes for places were depressed by poor prospects of actual enrolment. Secondly, this survey presents no evidence on either supply or demand in areas currently without access to a nursery class. Whereas the siting of nurseries in the cities and towns may be helpful to the main socially-deprived groups, it ignores the claims of rural children for companionship and stimulation. When teachers were asked about the main drawbacks of nursery education, they unanimously highlighted its limited availability. This inadequacy of provision has coloured each issue and each viewpoint to be presented in this report.

3. Kinds of Placement

In 1974, the Department of Education[3] outlined a programme for the expansion of nursery provision, suggesting that all parents wishing to send their children to nursery schools should be able to do so. The DENI then envisaged that some 15 per cent of nursery places would be full-time, with 85 per cent part-time places.

In 1985, the nursery teachers indicated that two children in every three were attending for the full nursery day. Of the remainder, there was a higher level of attendance at the morning than at the afternoon sessions. Some 67 per cent of nursery children attended all day, whereas 19 per cent attended mornings and 14 per cent afternoons.

The teachers were also asked how long each child would spend before leaving the nursery. Whereas they estimated that 44 per cent of children would spend three school terms (one year), a further 15 per cent would spend less than a year. The remaining 41 per cent would spend four terms and upwards, with 17 per cent having two full years in nursery classes.

In the situation already described, that of demand exceeding the supply of nursery places, this introduces two kinds of difficulty. Is a whole-day place to be allocated to a child if this means that a second child cannot be given a half-day place? Is a second year in the nursery to be allocated to a child if this means that a second child cannot be accepted for a single year? These pose difficult but real choices for the principal teachers and the members of the selection advisory panels who control admission to the few nursery schools and units.

4. Children with Special Needs

In 1977, the Department of Education[4] issued a circular which specified that "as a rule, no more than two handicapped children should be enrolled in any nursery class or group of 25 children." Asked about the numbers of children in each class who had been referred by an educational psychologist or school medical officer, the nursery teachers reported an average number of 2.0 children in each single-class nursery and 2.6 children in each double-class nursery. Altogether, this amounted to 6 per cent of the total number of children in nursery classes.

The teachers were asked to indicate the kinds of handicaps among these children, distinguishing between social, emotional, intellectual and multiple handicaps. Among the relatively few handicapped children, they felt that some 60 per cent were suffering from social or emotional disabilities, 26 per cent from physical handicaps, 9 per cent intellectual handicaps and 5 per cent multiple handicaps.

The teachers were also asked to indicate whether they could admit further handicapped children to their classes, or if they had already been unable to admit handicapped children. The 'offers' and 'refusals' were numerically equal, each amounting to one-sixth of the total number of handicapped children who were already enrolled. When these numbers were compared in the case of each nursery, it emerged that 71 per cent of the 'refusals' were from nurseries which already had three or more handicapped children on roll, as compared with 29 per cent of 'refusals' from nurseries with one or two such children already. Conversely, while 57 per cent of the 'offers' were from nurseries with at most one handicapped child, 43 per cent were from nurseries with two or more handicapped children. This included one offer of further places from a nursery which already had eight handicapped children.

It would seem that individual teachers differed in their readiness to admit handicapped children, and this adds a further dimension to an already complex problem. The question of the 'proper' number of nursery children with special needs is a difficult one. Admitting too many such children may destroy the 'normal' character of the class and diminish the benefit to the needy child through learning from others. Until there is universal nursery education so that handicapped children may be placed in proportion to their numbers in the population, the degree of 'privilege' which these children are accorded through preferential placement is an important issue.

5. Teachers' Characteristics

In terms of total teaching experience, there was an average of 14 years' completed service among nursery teachers. There was a broad range of experience, from a few teachers in their first year to one teacher with 43 years in teaching.

The majority of nursery teachers had transferred from other school sectors, two-thirds having formerly held a primary-school post and one-sixth having taught outside the primary sector. Some individuals had substantial teaching experience, 30 years in one case, before taking up nursery work. The average length of time in nursery classes was eight years, one teacher having spent 39 years in the nursery sector.

Among the nursery teachers, 73 per cent possessed one teaching qualification while 23 per cent possessed two qualifications and 4 per cent had three qualifications. There were four main kinds of qualification. Some 55 per cent of all qualifications consisted of the Certificate in Education, 16 per cent the Advanced Certificate in Nursery Education, 12 per cent the B.Ed. degree and 10 per cent the PGCE. Many of the nursery teachers indicated that they had trained for work in more than one school sector. While two-thirds had trained for nursery teaching, four-fifths had trained for infant teaching, one-third for junior teaching and one-tenth for secondary teaching.

The length of teachers' previous experience and their nursery service has to be set against a particularly sudden expansion in nursery provision in the second half of the 1970's. The survey also established that 70 per cent of nursery schools and units had opened in a seven-year period which began in 1974. Whether the present range of experience and qualifications among teachers in the nursery school is the current one is a matter for debate. It does, however, indicate that any further expansion of the nursery sector should be introduced through a planned and co-ordinated programme of preservice and inservice training that will achieve a teaching force that is balanced in terms of age, experience and qualifications.

6. Systems of Classroom Organisation

Each nursery class was organised in one of three ways. It offered either 'through day' provision, whereby each child attended all day, 'dual day' provision which admitted some children for the morning and others for the afternoon session, or 'mixed day' provision whereby some of the children attended all day, being joined by different groups of children in the mornings and afternoons.

Teachers provided very different descriptions of the merits and shortcomings of each classroom system. They emphasised the advantages of the through day, which was highly valued on grounds of educational quality and benefits for both children and staff. It was felt that this system permitted the closest possible contact between teacher and pupil, encouraging the child to learn and mature, to get along with others during class- and meal-times, and to prepare for the transition to primary school. It offered the opportunity for the teacher to present the full range of learning and play situations at the child's natural pace.

In contrast, the dual day was chiefly noted for its disadvantages. The teachers' workload was greater, the time to devote to each child was halved, and the educative and socialising influence of the school meal was lost. Because of a necessarily more hurried approach by the teacher, the children did not gain all-round benefit and the quality of education suffered. While the mixed day permitted alternative ways of organising the class and it afforded a choice of sessions, it was disruptive to classroom organisation and it added to both the teaching and administrative workloads.

The pattern of numbers of teachers using each of the three systems, as compared with the numbers who expressed a preference for each system, is given as Table 1. This shows that the through day was in general use throughout Northern Ireland nursery classes, and that it appealed still more strongly to teachers. The dual day was followed by one class in five, but it was the least favoured system. The mixed day, found among almost one class in ten, enjoyed only modest support among teachers.

The question of whether teachers' preferences related to their experience of each system is introduced in Table 2. This gives the numbers of teachers who either wanted to change to a particular system, retain that system, or change away from it. In the case of those wanting to change to a particular system, the figure in brackets represents the number of teachers who had experienced that system in former years. For example, of the 26 teachers who wanted to adopt the through day, 22 teachers had earlier experience of that system.

The relationship between teachers' preferences and experience is explored further through Table 3. The teachers had also been asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of each system, and sizeable numbers of teachers responded 'none' to one system or another, indicating their willingness to favour ('no disadvantages') or criticise ('no advantages') that system. Table 3 gives the levels of 'none' responses from teachers with current, former or no experience of each system. For example, 33 per cent of teachers currently using the through day said that it had no disadvantages, while none of these teachers said that it had no advantages. Table 3 shows that, in expressing support for a system ('no advantages'), those currently using the system were the most favourable towards it, those who formerly used the system were less favourably disposed, while those who had never experienced the system liked it least of all. This was true for each of the three classroom systems.

It may be argued, therefore, that the strong level of support for the through day needed to be qualified by its widespread usage. Whatever the classroom system, its merits were clearest to those using it while its defects were exaggerated by unfamiliarity. This suggests that, before claiming that one classroom system is uniquely superior to the others, there should first be debate among teachers who are familiar with the different systems about the merits of each.

7. The Teachers' Aims and Values

Asked about the aims of nursery education, the teachers largely responded with descriptions of specific areas of children's development. Some 72 per cent of their descriptions fell under the headings of intellectual, social, emotional, physical and general development. The objectives of social and intellectual development were mentioned a little more often than emotional and physical development. Alongside these priorities were ranked the advantages of preparing a child for primary school and encouraging individual maturity. Benefits to parents were mentioned less often.

The teachers' aims were almost wholly child-centred. For example, the aims of teachers in advocating intellectual development included such notions as 'learning how to learn', while descriptions of general development included the wish to 'let children develop fully'. As an example of one of the suggestions for a child's general development, a nursery principal wished "to provide a child-centred environment which stimulates intellectual, emotional, physical and social development."

This pattern of replies was repeated in an almost identical list of suggested gains for children from nursery education. Again, social, intellectual, emotional, physical and general development accounted for almost three-quarters of teachers' responses. These two identical sets of replies arose from two dissimilar questions - "what are the three main aims of nursery education?" and "what are the major benefits which children derive from nursery education?". The teachers made it quite clear that the aims of nursery education were identical to the benefits which were to be gained by the child, and that the focus of nursery education was the development of the individual child.

These sets of answers were quite different from the responses to the question "what are the three main problems which prevent you from meeting the needs of your neighbourhood for nursery education?". Here, 60 per cent of teachers' replies concerned the scarcity of nursery places. Whereas most of the teachers said simply that places were in short supply, a sizeable minority went further and mentioned problems of financing and resources - the enquiry had identified an abrupt halt to the provision of new nurseries in 1981. Whereas teachers saw the benefits of nursery provision as centred on the child, they equated the problems of provision with inadequacies of the system.

This stark contrast between child benefit and inadequate opportunity is the current dilemma of nursery education in Northern Ireland. There is considerable parental demand for places, available for only a few children. The benefit of nursery education, as seen by teachers, is to the individual child who has obtained a nursery place. This is an 'all or nothing' situation which seems to draw a particularly unfair line among the children admitted and those excluded, simply because they are so young.

TABLE 1: Level of usage and teachers' preferences, for each system of classroom organisation.

System	through day	dual day	mixed day
actual usage	71%	20%	9%
ideal preference	79%	5%	16%

TABLE 2: Numbers of teachers who wished to change to each classroom system, retain it, or change away from it.

System	through day	dual day	mixed day
change to	26(22)	3(3)	17(12)
retain	123	6	11
change from	14	28	6

TABLE 3: Levels of responding 'no advantages' and 'no disadvantages' to each classroom system, among teachers with current, former or no experience of each system.

System	through day		dual day		mixed day	
	adv	disadv	adv	disadv	adv	disadv
current experience	0%	33%	5%	12%	8%	8%
former experience	0%	16%	5%	0%	9%	4%
no experience	13%	13%	11%	1%	12%	3%

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EDUCATING THE SOVIET MAN

Denis Hainsworth

It is only in the light of Soviet world vision that the educational curriculum of the USSR can be understood. The Soviet marxist sees his homeland in the forefront of a great historical process of a world in transition - first to socialism and then to communism. More importantly, he views this transition as inevitable and desirable: world reorganisation under communism will rest solidly on an authentic justice that springs from the ultimate elimination of class supremacy. Only so can the appropriate conditions evolve for the self-realisation of each individual. Therefore, the vast network of Soviet education is avowedly political in purpose. For all that, the Soviet curriculum planner does not consider it any less educative. With pride he points to the impressive record of Soviet education over the last sixty-seven years.[1]

The basic structure of Soviet educational theory is concentrated in the term "Pedagogics". From the outset, therefore, it is important to understand the technical meaning of this word. The authoritative Soviet dictionary (Ozhegov) defines "Pedagogika" as the "science of education and teaching". Accordingly, this analysis of Soviet educational theory begins with the distinction between "education" and "teaching" as understood by the Soviets.

Teaching and Education

Soviet text books on teacher training subdivide Pedagogics into the two major sections of "Didactics" and "Education".[2] Didactics has to do more specifically with the methodology of teaching. Education is seen as a far larger concept. This is not just an academic distinction. To be taught, instructed or "schooled" is not the same as to be educated. The taught person is equipped with factual knowledge, know-how or skills. At the same time, his attitude and behaviour towards others might be marked with coarseness, disregard, superficiality and insincerity. In Russian, such a person is called "uneducated" (*nevospitanny*). The ideal, of course, is to be both well taught and educated, but to educate is a far greater challenge. It aims for a total, and not just the cerebral, formation of the child. Consequently, it demands from the educator many different activities and relationships with the child, both inside and outside the classroom. Especially important is the teacher's own example.

Among the first to stress this distinction between teaching and education was the famous Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and first Soviet Minister of Education. She spelled out that the total human formation implied in the term "education" embraced the psychological, physical, aesthetic, social and moral.[3]

Since there are many dimensions to be fostered in the child's education, one could hardly expect the teacher to be responsible for everything. All the educative forces of the socialist community must be enlisted. For this reason, Pedagogics will always consider the educative roles of family, youth movements (Octobrists, Pioneers and Komsomol), the media, literature, work experience as supplement to classroom life and, finally, membership in the pupils' collective. The planned orchestration of all these educative factors is referred to as the "complex approach" to education.[4]

Although the teacher cannot be held exclusively responsible for the child's education, he is nevertheless a key element in the whole orchestrated "complex approach". He is, after all, the one adult to whom the child is exposed daily and for long periods of the day. Not only does the child hear his words; he observes his behaviour. To the teacher whose behaviour commands respect the child will give a spontaneous respectful hearing. "Backing up the word", says the great Soviet educator Sukhomlinsky, "is living example. and that example educates - of that let there be no doubt."[5] Indeed, the name of Sukhomlinsky himself has almost become a household word in the USSR precisely because, even during his brief life-span of fifty-two years, he had come to be seen as educator *par excellence*. His example as a man and teacher as well as his writings reflected a perceptive and concerned individual who had an appreciation for beauty in all its forms and felt extraordinary empathy with the child learner. Sunce his death in 1970 Sukhomlinsky has become something of a modern day folk hero in his own country.

Communist World View

The Soviet curriculum is so geared that a child will be exposed to the communist vision from his earliest years at school. The teacher who deals with the youngest school learners is reminded that his first rudimentary lessons in this area will only be successful to the degree that they make a strong appeal to the children's emotions and sense of justice. Sukhomlinsky describes a lesson given to pre-schoolers around six years of age on the notion of anti-imperialism:

> I told them about countries where the wealth belongs to a group of capitalists and landlords while the worker is deprived of essentials. I don't rush the children into an abstract grasp of "imperialism". *That time will come*. For now the all-important objective is that they receive *clear mental pictures* produced in *emotional colours* (italics mine). [6]

Three points are worth making here: (a) commitment to an ideal comes about only if the teacher appeals to the child's feelings as well as to his intellect, but (b) the teacher's message must also be packaged and delivered according to the child's intellectual capacity to receive. However, (c) the child's intellect will develop in subtlety, thus allowing for a deeper, more formal grasp of "imperialism" at some later stage.

In his own way, Sukhomlinsky is restating Jerome Bruner's dictum that "any subject (can) be taught to any child at any age in some form that is honest."[7] As a matter of fact, the provisions in the Soviet curriculum for teaching the communist world view are reminiscent of Bruner's so-called "spiral curriculum". The essentials of communist doctrine are presented to the child initially in embryonic or anecdotal form. As the child matures, the same themes are time-tabled for re-presentation and enlargement in a different, more suphisticated form or combination of forms, but always "by modes of thinking that (the child) already possess(es)."[8] By way of illustration with one particular article of communist dogma, the teaching of *materialism* in all its various applications unfolds in the following manner: classes I-III (seven to nine years of age) are simply made familiar with natural phenomena and their causes.[9] At the same time, the groundwork is laid for an attitude of irreconciliable opposition to the theistic vision of reality. For this second objective to succeed with the children the teacher must convince and clarify, not pressurize.[10] He also makes his appeal to the child's emotions and sense of justice:

> In a manner they can understand, the beginners' classes should be familiarized with the scientific causes for natural phenomena ... Inside and outside the clsssroom, measures are to be taken to cultivate in the children an emotional rejection of all religious manifestations as something unscientific and socially harmful. [11]

Classes IV-VI (ten to twelve years) are brought to focus in a formal manner on the essentially material nature of our world. They are also sensitized to the tell-tale signs of harmful religious influences. Classes VII-VIII (thirteen to fourteen years) are taught in greater detail the basic laws and forms of matter's existence. Classes IX-X (fifteen to sixteen years) assimilate in a more systematic manner the basic positions of dialectical and historical materialism. At the same time, their atheism should be becoming more active and militant in its opposition to religious thinking and behaviour.[12] In this connection, certain school subjects, e.g. history, literature, social science and the scientific-mathematical disciplines, are recognised as performing an ancillary role; indeed they are taught in such a way as to corroborate marxist philosophy, political economy and scientific communism.[13]

Intellect

In his address to a 1984 plenary session of the Party's Central Committee, General Secretary Chernenko stated that "the construction of a new world demands a tireless concern to form the man of that new world, in the fullness of his intellectual and moral stature."[14] The next two sections now deal with the implications of "intellectual" and "moral" stature in light of Soviet Pedagogics.

In the early post-revolutionary years, Krupskaya vigourously took up the cudgels against those who proposed a monotechnical or specialised orientation for Soviet education. She sharply criticised a system that merely imparted the craftsman's skill unconnected with mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography and other general subjects.[15] As it turned out, her polytechnical camp carried the day, and this official decision carried with it certain implications for the child's intellectual formation within the curriculum. In fact, it was precisely because she believed it would produce workers "with the capacity of adapting to changing conditions, and of rapid personal reorientation" that Krupskaya fought for the polytechnization of the curriculum in the first place.[16] She held that intellectual resourcefulness and the capacity for diversification would be of infinitely greater value to developing socialism than a narrowly specialized training.

A 1984 joint study on Pedagogics carried out by the Academies of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR and the GDR set down the following aims for the pupil's intellectual development: clarity and exactitutde; mental discipline; creativity; initiative and self-sufficiency (samostoyatel'stvo). These aims require that the pupil be grounded in analysis and synthesis, demonstration, comparison, deduction, generalisation and classification. Good thinking also presupposes (a) finely tuned perceptive powers insuring the learner of a reliable grasp of his surrounding objective world, and (b) the subjective faculty of a creative imagination[17] (presumably for the activity of intuition in the areas of hypothesizing and problem-solving).

Another highly estimated quality of intellect, of particular importance in a work-orientated society, is the capacity to find some practical application for all one's knowledge. Knowledge should never remain in a vacuum; it should overflow into areas of need or into the cultural, political or social life of the commmunity.[18]

According to the Soviet East German study, "development of mind and of intellectual curiosity (poznavatel'nogo interesa)" pays dividends to the individual as well as to the socialist community. The study defends the position that the activation of man's thought processes becomes the source of one of his greatest personal satisfactions.[19]

Here again, as for the teaching of the communist world view, the teacher is cautioned never to appeal to the child's intellect alone since a child is not intellect alone. In one and the same child the rational and emotional must grow simultaneously like two mutually reinforcing dimensions. Emotions must move with mind, feelings with facts.[20]

Morality

A person's moral code regulates his behaviour (a) towards other individuals and (b) towards society as a whole.

First of all, behaviour towards other individuals: interpersonal relationships, if truly based on mutual respect, require pretty much the same standards of behaviour in socialist lands as elsewhere. "Communist ethics", says Soloveychik, "in no way repudiates the entire past experience of people throughout history; it merely encompasses it. Communist ethics is rather the highest form of ethics developed by mankind."[21]

Hence, it is in the area of man's moral obligations towards society as such that the marxist code of ethics begins to differ. This is hardly surprising since marxist philosophy has it distinctive ideas about what a just and healthy society should be, viz. an exclusively socialist society en route to communism. It is here that some new moral concepts and terms make their appearance: Soviet patriotism counterbalanced by socialist (or proletariate) internationalism, the positive work-attitude, collectivism, i.e., sense of responsibility for and solidarity with socialist society.[22]

Moral do's and dont's are taken on board more easily by the pupil if he is first introduced to them in their ideal form as a life-synthesis. Hence the policy of Sukhomlinsky and others of introducing the children to the lives of socialist heroes who are the incarnations of the great moral ideal of "communist humanism". Later, as the child's mind achieves greater subtlety, the teacher assists him to crystallize for himself the formal concept of communist humanism as the full repository of all true humanism and morality. In doing so, the teacher must attempt to discredit the argument that communism ignores the needs and interests of the individual human person and coldly subordinates him to the exigencies of historial process.[23]

Like all humanism, the communist variety proclaims man as highest value and claims to defend his dignity. It maintains, however, that pre-marxist forms of humanism only proclaimed man's value whereas communism deals with realities and thus launches a programme in defense of man's happiness, freedom and development. Since the programme aims for man's total liberation it must both influence human action and pervade human thought. Indeed, the programme proceeds precisely in that order; create first a social mould for human activity and then transform attitudes. The first condition of man's liberation is achieved with the liquidation of private ownership of the means of production. This eliminates the basis for man's exploitation by his fellow man. This historical task sees it accomplishment with the ascendancy of socialism. As a next step, socialist structures channel men towards a gradual but radical rethinking of the basic purpose of production: the notion of maximum profit gradually becomes discarded as the logical goal of production; it is replaced by the notion of a commensurate fulfilment of society's and the individual's growing needs. Thus the very goals of production are humanised, which finally allows material goods to be distributed on a new and equitable basis.[24]

Another striking characteristic of communist humanism is its advocacy not only of action and militancy[25] but, in some circumstances, even of violence (nasilie) as a moral duty.[26] In fact, it is due to its lack of militancy that communism declares itself the enemy of what it calls "abstract humanism". This latter has become an effective weapon for anti-marxist forces in their ideological struggle against world socialism; it exerts a dangerously pacifying influence over "the minds and souls of men, especially the young, who do not have the great socialist experience."[27] It is because abstract humanism takes an unrealistic view of man that it places an absolute prohibition on violence. It sees human nature only in its potential for good whereas it should be studying man in a concrete, historical light. Only so can one fully appreciate all the real contradictions in society which have divided the race into exploiters and exploited. The clarion call for a universal brotherly love cannot even be heard until certain ugly impediments are forcibly, if not violently, removed. Meanwhile, abstract humanism is simply being used by the forces of exploitation to divert the attention of the working classes from the real issues.[28]

Work

Soviet Pedagogics maintains that education should prepare for work, but that work should also be a means of education.

Education prepares for work: work builds up socialism; therefore, the pupil must be prepared for work. The curriculum prepares not just by teaching the theoretical aspects of farming, technology, work organisation, etc. It also imparts the communist understanding of the nature of work. In doing so, it makes two fundamental points: (a) work produces material goods which one may enjoy in good conscience. In this, Soviet Socialism is at odds with "Maoism" which it accuses of making a virtue out of poverty. On the other hand, (b) its citizens must not see communist society as a mere consumer society. The system is not to be viewed as Big Brother's Dispensary; people must realise that they must work for what they receive. While communism makes every effort to bring about *freedom of work*, it does not proclaim *freedom from work*. It strives to improve and lighten conditions of work, but even in the most favourable conditions work must always be considered a serious moral responsibility demanding dedication and creativity.[29]

Work as a means of education: work experience forms part of the curriculum. Ideally, it should be generating interest in work, accuracy and resourcefulness, sense of duty and reliability. In practice, however, the work experience has not always been successful. The authorities honestly admit that in the past heavy and often monotonous tasks have sometimes had a negative effect on pupils; consequently the programme has had to be reassessed and modified several times.[30]

Sukhomlinsky's school achieved considerable success with its work programme. The following points are the distillation of his twenty-three years experience: (1) Never make a fetish out of work; it does not automatically educate. Its educative value springs from the mental preparation given to the pupil for even the most manual and repetitive of tasks. (2) There exist different categories of work, each with its respective structure, dynamics and attendant circumstances. The pupil must be assisted to put each one into proper mental and emotional focus. (3) For the child's well rounded development it is important that he experience all the categories. (4) The child who emerges from any really challenging work, especially one of long duration, with the awareness of achieved success acquires the psychological impetus to launch a similar thrust into all other areas. Achieving the first success is to establish a beachhead.[31]

The Children's Collective

The collective is a phenomenon that runs through Soviet life like a network of cells. It is defined as "a group of people who constitute a part of society, are aggregated together in mutual association and joint activity by a common goal which is subordinate to the goals of society itself."[32] The Soviet Constitution (art. 8) grants workers' collectives wide-ranging powers involving productivity planning, personnel deployment, work management, arrangement of members' living and working conditions and, finally, the *on-going education* of its members in the *spirit of communist morality*.[33]

The pioneers of Soviet education, like Krupskaya and the respected theoretician A.S. Makarenko, insisted that even young school children should be learning to live the collective experience. Each class was expected to funish evidence of a highly organised collective.[34] Makarenko specified that it was not even a case of the children playing at collective; theirs was to be a veritable "cell of the socialist society, with *all* the characteristics, rights and duties of any other collective in the USSR (italics mine)".[35]

Sukhomlinsky's views differ somewhat on the children's collectives: clearly, they cannot have "*all* the characteristics ... of any other collective in the USSR." Children's collectives cannot function like adult ones because children are not adults. They are more vulnerable; they tend to be over-enthusiastic, if not at times imprudent. These differences alone demand tight control over one recognised function of the collective, that of administering public rebuke or imposing penalties on erring members. Any such public criticism before and by one's peers would, Sukhomlinsky insisted, constitute a grave trauma for most children; alternative, less humiliating, methods would have to be devised.[36] From his clearly child-centred perspective Sukhomlinsky views the collective more as a vehicle of education than as a miniature of Soviet life. It is the fostering "nest from which the fledgling is (eventually) sent forth on his independent flight."[37]

Makarenko had stressed that the collective experience was not to be a forcible levelling or recasting of the child's personality. It was to be more correctly viewed as a favourable climate in which individual personalities are encouraged to flower. Sukhomlinsky gained further insight into the organism of the collective. He saw the collective experience as a two-way influence; the individual child forms the collective no less than the collective forms the child. In his own school, Sukhomlinsky made it a point to help individual pupils to clarify their interests or ascertain their talents, from the most practical to the most academic. Every area of expertise was deemed of equal importance for it went into what the pupils called their own class's "intellectual fund", i.e. a kind of class treasury of knowledge, know-how and skills. Each pupil would then know to whom to turn and direct others for help in the solution of any number of problems. To each his own area of proficiency, to each his rightful share in collective pride. Thus, a fresh dimension of thought and some new vocabulary enter into educational literature on children's collectives. Perhaps the dimension was always latently there, but Sukhomlinsky rendered it explicit when he began to speak of a collective's "spiritual life". It was as though collectives, like individuals, were now recognized as having a kind of personality of their own.[38]

This paper, which has drawn from representative and relevant Soviet literature, is intended as a values-free report on several though by no means all the component areas of Soviet educational theory. Limitations of space have precluded, for example, a discussion of the important area of aesthetic education. For now we must remain content with the tip of the iceberg.

FOOTNOTES

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15. N.K. Krupskaya, O politekhnicheskom obrazovanii, trudovom vospitanii i obuchenii (Politechnical Formation, Education and Training for Work). (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1982), pp. 7,9.

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24. Ibid., pp. 139-140.

25. Ibid., p. 142.

26. Ibid., p. 143.

27. Ibid., p. 142.

28. Ibid., pp. 142-146.

29. Ibid., pp. 140-141.

30. Neuner-Babansky, pp. 173-174.

31. Sukhomlinsky, *O vospitanii*, p. 122.

32. Savin, p. 194.

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EXAMINATIONS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION - AN IRISH PERSPECTIVE

Denis O'Boyle

PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND

From the introduction of the Intermediate Act of 1878 to the establishment of a new secondary programme in 1924, very little consideration had been given to the place of physical education within the secondary school curriculum, even though the subject had been emphasised in the Revised Programme of Instruction in National Schools,[1] introduced in 1902. Among the objectives listed for teachers was the importance of physical training for deportment, physical health and for pleasure.

In 1924, with the establishment of the Irish Free State, a new programme for secondary schools was introduced. The core of this programme consisted of Irish, English, mathematics, history, geography and either science, commerce or a modern language. Schools were free to offer instruction in a number of other subjects. Physical education was one of these latter 'non-compulsory subjects'. This status of 'optional subject' has persisted to the present time, a situation that might well have been varied if the recommendations of The Physical Education Report of 1938[2] had been implemented. This report recommended that physical education be made compulsory, should be allocated three periods a week and be made a subject for certificate examinations in second-level schools. This report also made the bold assertion, for the time, that the provision of a training college for specialist teachers of physical education was as advisable as it was logical. These recommendations were never acted upon, mainly due to the lack of finance available to the Minister of Education at the time and the disruption caused by the Second World War. Irish education had to wait until the 1960s before the Government found the resources to invest in the promotion of physical education.

The decade 1965-1975 marked the greatest development in the subject since the foundation of the State. These developments included the appointment of four physical education inspectors, the introduction of a syllabus in the subject of both primary and secondary level, a system of distributing grants for the purchasing of equipment, the organisation of inservice courses in the subject each year, the setting up of Cospoir (the National Sports Council), the building of 25 new sports halls, and the establishment of the National College of Physical Education which was opened in 1973 for the training of both male and female physical education teachers.

It should be recalled, at this juncture, that, up to 1965, there existed little or no financial commitment by the Department of Education towards the subject. Another significant factor, related to this, was the lack of significant pressure brought to bear on the State by the various educational interest groups, to ensure that teachers and facilities be made available in order for it to become a compulsory subject.

However, recent trends indicate that physical education will be one of the 'core subjects' in the proposed new Secondary School Curriculum. In September 1984, the

Curriculum and Examinations Board published a Consultative Document[3] in which the proposed framework for the junior-cycle curriculum was put forward. Included in the list of 'core subjects' was physical education. If implemented, physical education will be a compulsory subject in second-level schools, a factor which will necessitate the employment of at least one physical education teacher in every school in the Republic. This proposal will be seen by most physical educationalists as the most significant step in the history of the subject in Ireland.

In response to the Curriculum and Examination Board's proposals for the subject, the Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI), which represents the views of the majority of physical education teachers in the country, while welcoming the proposals, included the following recommendations to the Board:

> Physical education ought to be a certified area of experience at senior cycle level. The nature and manner of assessment needs thorough examination. The present imbalance among cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains with respect to assessment ought to be redressed. Further to this, assessment in physical education should relate to other modes of assessment within the curriculum. 4

At the National Conference of Physical Education in Cork, Dr. D. G. Mulcahy, Professor of Education in University College Cork, was also of the opinion that physical education should become an examination subject. In elaborating his views, he stated that:

> If we are to know the existing state of knowledge and development of students, we need to assess them also to see what progress if any they have made and how we might best guide their growth and

> development. This is as true for physical education, I submit, as it is of any other subject. [5]

Professor Mulcahy went on to point out the need for adequate tools for assessment in the subject and hoped that the Curriculum and Examinations Board would address itself to this area. However, no method of assessment has yet been decided upon by the Board.

When faced with a similar decision over twenty years ago in Great Britain, examinations in physical education were introduced at Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) level. Much can be gained from the experience of both Great Britain and Northern Ireland when deciding on which method of assessment is to be used in the Republic of Ireland.

EXAMINATIONS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

In 1955, in Birmingham, an unofficial pilot scheme to investigate the whole question of examinations was set up. Physical education was included in the scheme, which offered a wide range of curricular alternatives so that each child would find an area in which he or she might display powers of achievement. These examinations were intended to assess the performance of pupils in the practical applications of each subject between 1955 and 1958.

James N. Oliver, who later became the first Director of the National College of Physical Education in Limerick, submitted his findings to the Research Advisory Council. He concluded as follows:

> Physical education at its best is one of those school experiences that boys and girls really believe is of value for its own sake. Let us not kill that belief by examinations. 6

Oliver, nevertheless, had to concede that the status of physical education in schools where the pilot scheme operated was enhanced as a result of the experience.

> It seemed as though the subject was being recognised as something comparable with the more academic subjects. 7

Whereas in 1963 the Secondary Schools Examination Council had expressed opposition to physical education forming part of the CSE evaluation system,[8] in 1977 the Council recommended a withdrawal of general opposition to the idea of examinations. The reasons given for this reversal of option included:

A) An awareness of the enthusiasm that existed for its inclusion at CSE level, among teachers;

B) The involvement of many Regional Examinations Boards in assessing the subject since the mid-1960s; and

C) The satisfaction reported from schools examining the subject.

In 1980, a survey by Carroll and Macdonald of 400 physical education teachers revealed that many of them were strongly against the subject being put of the examination system.[9] However, in 1981 Carroll conducted a further study on Regional Examinations Boards in England and Wales and concluded that examinations in the subject had become well established and appeared to be increasing in demand.[10]

In Northern Ireland the year 1974 marked the initial period that led to the development of examinations in physical education. Two schools in Belfast, Lisnasharragh Secondary and Orangefield Boys' School, had prepared schemes and submitted to the Northern Ireland CSE Examination Board. At Lisnasharragh it was hoped that examinations in the subject would result in:

A) An increase in the depth and breath of the physical education programme at the school;

B) An increase in the number of staff in the physical education department; and

C) An increase in the provision of the means to satisfy many of the needs and interests of the pupils.

At Orangefield the reasons included a demand for the introduction of theoretical aspects into the physical education programme and a demand from the students for a greater choice and depth of involvement in activities.

In 1975 the Schools Examination Council in Northern Ireland recommended that physical education be added to the list of subjects accepted for examination at CSE level. In 1978 W. Edmond Officer found that an estimated 60% of teachers of physical education in Northern Ireland were in favour of examinations in their subject.[11] However, this figure does not reflect itself in the number of schools which are presently participating in examinations in the subject, a figure which amounts to less than 10% of Northern Ireland second-level schools. There also existed a dissatisfaction with the ability of the students who have opted for the course. Nevertheless, examinations in physical education have provided both students and teachers with an opportunity to pursue examinations in the subject or not, a situation which does not exist in the Republic of Ireland.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EXAMINATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

As no previous research existed regarding attitudes of the "interested bodies" to the issue of having examinations in physical education at Leaving Certificate level in the Repuglic, there was a clear need for such research, especially in the light of the Curriculum and Examinations Board's proposals to include physical education as a 'core subject' in second-level schools. A recent study was undertaken by the writer on 795 people.[12] These represented a comprehensive cross-section of those who could legitimately claim to be regarded as representing the 'interested bodies' and included 137 physical education teachers, 473 Leaving Certificate students, 139 student teachers of physical education, contact with three key personnel and 43 other people interested in the subject. Should examinations be introduced, it was felt that the following factors would need to be taken into consideration, namely:

1) Facilities;
2) Department of Education support for the subject;
3) Status;
4) Attitudes towards examinations in physical education; and
5) Teacher competence.

1) Facilities

In 1974 an enquiry into physical education in the Republic of Ireland revealed that facilities for teaching the subject were regarded as being less than satisfactory by physical education teachers.[13] Eleven years later, the facilities were regarded by physical education teachers as being satisfactory. However, Dr. Ken Hill, Head of Physical Education at Thomond College of Education, felt that the facilities for teaching the subject were unsatisfactory, a view shared by the majority of the other people studied. Facilities were multifarious, as can be seen from the following comments of two physical education teachers:

> I have a sportshall; outdoor tennis courts, 6 in all; two basketball courts; an all weather playing area; camogie pitch and use of a swimming pool and handball alley.

On the other hand:

> I have no changing rooms, no showers, no gym nor sportshall; in all there is a complete lack of facilities for indoor games at my school.

There exists a great diversity in facilities for the teaching of physical education throughout Ireland from the excellent to the very poor. Should examinations in the subject become part of the Public Examination System, resources will be required to ensure standardisation of facilities to meet the syllabus requirements. The Department has taken a major step in this regard by making it compulsory for all new schools to have provision for physical education in their construction.

2) Department of Education Support for Physical Education

The Department of Education was doing all it possibly could for physical education in terms of financial and moral support, according to Captain Michael McDonough, Chief Inspector of Physical Education in the Department of Education. This view was not shared by all the other participants in the writer's 1985 study. The fact that physical education was not a compulsory subject in second-level schools, together with the dissatisfaction with basic facilities gave credence to these latter opinions. Mr. Pat Stanton, a member of the Curriculum and Examinations Board Working Party, was of the opinion that the Board set up by the Department will greatly enhance physical education in the second-level schools by recommending it to be one of the 'core subjects'. This he felt would require a greater commitment from the Department in terms of employing teachers in every school and in improving facilities, a situation which would be necessitated should the subject become examinable at Leaving Certificate level.

3) Status of Physical Education

In 1978, a national survey on physical education revealed that the status of the subject was regarded as being low by physical education teachers in second-level schools.[14] In the 1985 study, physical education teachers and Leaving Certificate students viewed the status of the subject as being 'above average', while Dr. Hill and the other participants regarded it as being 'low'. Nevertheless, a large majority of those who participated in the 1985 study were of the opinion that the status of the subject would be enhanced if it was an examinable subject. With this degree of unanimity, it is a short step to forming the conclusion that examinations in the subject would not only increase the status of the subject but also that of the physical education teacher in second-level schools throughout Ireland.

4) Attitudes Towards Examinations in Physical Education

The major finding of the 1985 study by the writer revealed that 62% of physical education teachers would be against the introduction of examinations in their subject at Leaving Certificate level. However, the majority of all the other participants in this research stated that they would be in favour of such a development.

The main advantages of having examinations in the subject were given as follows by physical education teachers:

1) It would increase the status of the subject;
2) It would give pupils who are gifted in the subject an opportunity to get a grade on it;
3) It would help standardise facilities and course content;
4) There would be a greater knowledge of the theory of physical education;
5) It would provide direction for both teacher and pupil.

The following represent the main disadvantages in having an examination at Leaving Certificate level, as put forward by physical education teachers:

1) It would restrict the teaching of the subject;
2) More pressure and stress would be put on students;
3) It would become an élitist subject;

Nevertheless, the majority who participated in the study were of the opinion that the standards of the practical abilities and the theoretical knowledge of the subject would improve if it had an examinable subject. Continuous assessment and project work were the most favoured methods in the evaluation of the theoretical aspects while physiological testing and demonstration of skills in an individual setting and in team games were the most common methods suggested for the practifal evaluation. Overall, it was found that a higher percentage of time and grades should be devoted to the practical aspects of the subject as opposed to the theoretical aspects. It was also suggested that a grade in physical education should count as points for entry into third level colleges.

Over 61 percent of Leaving Certificate students stated that they would choose to study physical education if it was an examination subject. This figure can be explained in two ways:

A) The students might improve their chance in seeking employment after school, as a grade in physical education would give an added dimension to their personal profiles; and

B) They might see it as a subject in which they could benefit from their physical attributes.

It was also interesting to note that 82 percent of student teachers of the subject would favour an 'optional examination' as opposed to a 'compulsory examination' at Leaving Certificate level. An 'optional examination' would give both student and teacher a choice to pursue an examination course or not. Examinations in the subject would also provide more opportunities for these student teachers in securing employment after leaving Thomond College.

5) Teacher Competence

One factor to be borne in mind when considering the introduction of formal examinations into an educational system is the competence of those on whom the responsibility would fall of preparing the candidates. The situation as regards physical education appears to be no different from that which governs examinations in other subjects. Over 90 percent of physical education teachers considered themselves competent to teach their subject to examination level. A similar view was held by Dr. Ken Hill, Head of Physical Education at Thomond College. However, inservice courses could help provide the necessary assistance to those who require further training and confidence in their ability to teach the subject to examination level.

CONCLUSION

Physical education in the Republic of Ireland has just entered a new stage in its development. The Curriculum and Examinations Board has recommended that it become a 'core subject' and that it be assessed in second-level schools. As no method of assessment has yet been decided upon, the writer set out in his 1985 study on "Examinations in Physical Education in Second Level Schools in the Republic", to attempt to ascertain the attitudes of the "interested bodies" towards the introduction of examinations in physical education at Leaving Certificate level. In investigating the role played by examinations in the subject in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, it became evident that there failed to exist total support for this method of evaluation. While there appeared to be a growth in the demand for the examination in Great Britain, the same could not be said in Northern Ireland. Although examinations in physical education are not compulsory in these countries, they nevertheless provide both teacher and pupil with an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the subject and be rewarded for it by way of certification.

The 1985 study revealed that there is a large body of support for the introduction of examinations in the subject at Leaving Certificate level, a view supported by the policy of the Physical Education Association of Ireland. Nevertheless, when given an opportunity to give their opinion on the issue, 62 percent of physical education teachers opposed such a development. Their arguments against such a measure revolved around the restrictions, pressures and stresses associated with examinations in general. Their opposition may also have resulted from the fear of supporting an assessment method without first having a knowledge of the draft proposals for such a development.

There have been many articles and conference papers consisting of arguments for and against examinations in physical education. These have helped to provide the basis for thinking about innovations in the evaluation of the subject. In very simple terms, the opposing arguments can be expressed as follows:

> Examinations or certification would provide credibility for physical education and make it comparable to other academic school subjects.[15]

and

> Physical education has its own unique contribution to make to the education of young people. It does not need to seek academic credibility - examinations would distort the essential nature of our subject.[16]

These opposing opinions highlight the lack of unanimous support for public examinations in the subject, a situation also highlighted in this paper. It can be concluded that the case for examinations in physical education is as yet not fully proven. There still exists a lack of consensus among physical educationists on this issue. Nevertheless, the fact remains that physical education is an 'optional' examinable subject in Northern Ireland and Great Britain and recent trends in the review of educational policy in these countries suggest that it will continue to remain so in the near future. It is essential that physical educationists benefit from the experiences of those involved in examinations as it is in this way that the Republic's 600 physical education teachers will be better able to make a decision on where they stand regarding the examinations issue, should such a development take place in the near future.

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ANALYSING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE: AN EXPERIMENTAL EXAMINATION IN MATHEMATICS

Seamus McGuinness

Introduction

Written examinations can be divided into two main categories:

i) those in which the examinee selects the correct answer from a given number of options or possible correct answers. This is referred to as the selection type of item - multiple choice items, true/false items, matching items are all examples of this type. They are often classified as objective test examinations; and

ii) those which require the examinee to supply an answer to the question posed. Essay questions, short-answer questions and numerical questions where the answer must be produced are examples of the supply type.[1]

Objective tests are usually pre-tested and computer scored. Well established statistical techniques have been developed for evaluating the technical quality of these tests. Typically information is obtained on the facility value of each question or item, that is, the proportion of candidates who succeed in answering it correctly; and on the discrimination level which indicates whether the candidates who get a particular item correct are also those who tend to score best on the test as a whole. In this way a large measure of control can be exercised over the quality of the test before it is administered in a public examination.[2]

The aim of this paper is to illustrate, by analysing an experimental examination in mathematics, how some basic statistical techniques might be applied to such tests with a view to improving their quality. It is suggested that this or a similar type of analysis can be used to pre-test essay type questions so that some measure of control can be exercised over their quality before they are used in public examinations. Alternatively the analysis can be conducted after the examination has taken place and the information obtained can be used to evaluate the performances of the candidates. It is not possible to present a comprehensive treatment of the many statistical techniques which can be applied to analyse essay type examinations within the limitations of this paper. If the basic data on the scores obtained by each candidate on each question or part of a question are collected and stored it is possible to undertake the analysis in stages. In this paper the first stage in this process will be presented. Basic statistical measures such as the mean scores and standard deviations will be computed and interpreted. It is contended that these measures can provide a wealth of information on the quality of the test and that, moreover, they can be used by any teacher having an elementary knowledge of computation to evaluate his or her own school based tests.

While the data presented in this paper are used for illustrative purposes only, some details related to the development of the test in question and to the pupils who were examined are given as background information. These are presented in the next section.

Background Information on the Experimental Examination

The test data presented in this paper were collected in the course of research undertaken by the Public Examinations Evaluation Project which was set up on the recommendation of a committee established to evaluate the form and function of the Intermediate Certificate Examination. The Committee, which proposed that the centrally devised examinations at this level be gradually replaced by a system of school based assessment, asked the project team to concern itself with

i) the devising of examinations which will demand higher level skills than are at present exercised in the Intermediate Certificate Examination.

ii) the possibilities of large scale use of objective rather than essay type examinations, and their advantages in reliability and speed of scoring.

iii) the involvement of teachers and school authorities in the assessment of their own pupils, and

iv) in collaboration with the syllabus committees, working toward the further training of teachers in the devising of their own examinations, so that the expertise of the project team would be spread through the post-primary system.[3]

The research was to be concerned with the development of assessment techniques in two subjects, history and mathematics.[4] Reference will be made here to the work related to the assessment of mathematics.

In order to involve teachers in the assessment process courses were organised at a number of centres throughout the country. The courses, conducted on one night per week over an eight week period, were concerned with the specification of aims and objectives for the teaching of mathematics at this level and with the design of techniques of assessment which would test for the attainment of the objectives.[5] Subsequently, an experimental examination was developed by the teachers and administered to their pupils. The test discussed in this paper was taken by pupils opting for the higher course in the subject. On average about 30 per cent of all the candidates take the higher course in the public examination. In all over 250 pupils from about 20 schools took the experimental examinations. Some details which relate to the development and the administration of the examination are included in the following section.

Development and Administration of the Examination

The experimental examination was based on the existing syllabus in mathematics as prescribed by the Department of Education. The syllabus outlines the course of study to be followed by the pupils for the three years prior to taking the public examination. The teachers designed three separate papers as compared with the usual two papers which are offered at the public examination. The three papers were divided as follows:[6]

Paper I consisted of a forty item objective test to be answered in one hour. It was designed to test knowledge and comprehension. This paper was computer scored and analysed following the usual procedures for such tests.

Peper II, which will be discussed in more detail later, consisted of eighteen short answer questions, the first ten questions were designed to test manipulative skills and the next eight application. Some of the questions were divided into parts so that in all 41 separate items had to be answered. The students were expected to attempt all of the questions and a space was provided on the script after each item for the students to perform the necessary calculations in order to arrive at an answer. Two hours were given to complete this paper.

Paper III consisted of ten long answer questions of which the students were expected to attempt six and complete in two hours. The questions were designed to test analysis and synthesis. Detailed marking schemes were provided for Papers II and III. These scripts were examined by the teachers and the scores and scripts were returned to the project centre for checking and analysis. The data were entered into the computer at Trinity College, Dublin, and analysed using an SPSS package.

The experimental examination differed from that used in the Intermediate Certificate Examination in the following respects.

i) Three separate papers were provided instead of two although the total time given to the pupils, five hours, was the same for both examinations.

ii) In the experimental examination each question was designed to test a specific objective, and all of the questions testing the same objective were grouped together into a sub-test. In this way it was hoped that the link between assessment and course objectives would be more apparent so that teacher awareness of the need to develop higher level skills in the classroom might be increased (Remit No. 1). No such link between questions and the objectives they seek to test is apparent in the public examinations.

iii) Candidates were required to cope with one question style only on any one paper whereas in the public examination the separate papers include both objective test items and essay type questions.

The teachers who participated in this research did so on a voluntary basis and, as such, they cannot be regarded as typical or representative of the larger group of teachers of mathematics. Moreover, since the pupils who took the experimental examination were either taught by these same teachers or attended the schools where these teachers were employed, no generalisations to a larger group of students can be made.

The tests were administered to the pupils up to two months before they sat for the puplic examination and in many cases were used by the teachers in place of the usual "mock" tests which are administered around the same time. It will be appreciated that many of the pupils would not have reached the final stages of preparation at this time and, consequently, their performances would need to be interpreted with some caution. Some further details on Paper II will be included in the following section.

The Experimental Examination: Paper II

The particular paper to be analysed is the short answer paper (Paper II). Section I contained ten questions (23 separate parts in all) and was designed to test manipulative skills. This skill was described as follows:

> This objective includes the ability to perform straightforward computations, simplifications and solutions similar to examples already set in the classroom, although different in detail. The question may be such that no decision is required on how to approach the solution, only the use of a technique which has been learned, or it may be that a rule must be recalled and then a straightforward technique used.

It was decided to test two levels of manipulative skills - Level I consisting of one or two steps and marked on a hit or miss basis, and level II, consisting of more than two steps and marked in stages.[7] Questions on this section designed at Level I included:

1(a) How many pupils can get 60p from a prize of £90?

3(a) Factorise $x^2-4x-12$.

3(c) Change 23 base 10 to a number in base 2.

Questions designed at Level II included:

10. The ages of three people are in the ration of 3:2:1. Their average age is 16 years. What is the age of each person?

Section II, consisting of eight questions (18 parts in all), was designed to test application. This was defined as follows:

> This is the ability to apply knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar situations. It implies the selection of an appropriate known principle in a situation not previously encountered, the restructuring of the data in a suitable form and the application of the principle. Comprehension of an abstraction does not guarantee that the student will be able to recognise its relevance and apply it correctly in real life situations.

Two definitions of application were formulated by the working party:

a) Translation of a problem into a mathematical form which can then be solved by one set of processes.

b) Application of one set of procedures to a problem which first might have to be translated into a mathematical form.[8]

Questions in this section designed for stage (a) included:

11(a) A motor car travels a distance of 210 km in three hours and 45 mins. What is the average speed in km per hour?

and for stage (b)

18. A ladder leaning against a wall makes an angle of 50° with the ground. The ladder reaches a point

20m. up the wall. By what distance should the front of the ladder be moved away from the wall in order to halve the angle which the ladder makes with the ground?

Analysis of the Data

1. Summary Statistics Measures

The first stage in the analysis of the data is to present the summary statistical measures for each of the two sections and for the paper as a whole. These are outlined in Table 1. From the table it can be seen that Section 1, which had an allocation of 88 marks, had an average score of 39 marks (44 per cent). Marks ranged from 0 to 84, and the mode or most commonly obtained mark was 27. The standard deviation, which indicates how well the marks are spread around the mean, was 15 marks (17 per cent). In an examination of this type where the aim is to discriminate between levels of achievement among the candidates it is usual to aim for an average mark of around 50 per cent and to seek a fairly good spread of marks around that average. The measures obtained for Section 1 indicate that the test was pitched around the right level of difficulty. Moreover, fairly good use was made of the available range of marks and the candidates were well spread around the mean.

TABLE 1 Distribution of scores on paper two: higher course mathematics

PAPER II Short Answer Paper	SECTION I MANIPULATIVE SKILLS	SECTION II APPLICATION	TOTAL
Mark Allocation	88	112	200
Mean	39.04	40.38	80.20
Mean %	44.36	36.05	40.10
Mode	27	22	25
Standard Deviation	14.97	19.75	31.83
Standard Deviation %	17.01	17.63	15.67
Minimum Score	0	0	4
Maximum Score	84	89	172
N			257

Section II of the test with an average of 36 per cent was much more difficult. Less efficient use was made of the available mark range although within these limits the candidates were well spread. The overall effect of combining the two sections raises the average score to 40 per cent, still on the difficult side, while the standard deviation becomes smaller because of the tendency for marks to regress towards the mean when they are combined.

In the following sections performances on individual questions will be examined in order to identify the specific factors which contributed to the general statistics presented in Table 1.

2. Distribution of Omits and Zero Scores

Candidates were expected to attempt all of the questions on this paper. Those who omitted a question were given a score of zero. Where a significant proportion of candidates fall into this category it had the effect of lowering the mean value obtained. As a first stage in the analysis it may be of interest to find out the degree to which this factor contributed to the summary measures obtained. The data are presented in Table 2 where the number of candidates who omitted a question or part of a question or who attempted but failed to obtain any marks is shown.

From the table it can be seen that a total of 61 candidates obtained no marks for question 1(a), and of that number about a third did not attempt the question. In all this figure represents almost one quarter of all the candidates. Inspection of the table will identify those questions which proved to be very difficult for the majority of the candidates. The most extreme examples occur in questions 16(d) and 18 where 93 per cent of the

TABLE 2 Paper 11, Number of omits and of zero scores by sub-question

QUESTION	NO. OF OMITS	NO. OF ZERO	TOTAL	
			NUMBER	% OF ALL STUDENTS
1(a)	21	40	61	23.74
1(b)	12	35	47	18.29
1(c)	71	88	159	61.87
2(a)	93	110	203	78.99
2(b)	7	16	23	8.95
3 a (i)	21	30	51	19.84
3 a (ii)	44	68	112	43.58
3(b)	33	50	83	32.30
4(a)	98	87	185	71.98
4(b)	63	53	116	45.14
5(a)	58	61	119	46.30
5(b)	33	47	80	31.13
5(c)	59	45	104	40.47
6(a)	18	31	49	19.07
6(b)	22	32	54	21.01
7 a (i)	45	48	93	36.19
7 a (ii)	77	86	163	63.42
7 a (iii)	91	111	202	78.60
8 a (i)	43	30	73	28.40
8 a (ii)	77	86	163	63.42
8 a (iii)	107	98	205	79.77
9	103	77	180	70.04
10	44	52	96	37.35
11(a)	40	62	102	39.69
11(b)	72	71	143	55.64
12(a)	17	15	32	12.45
12(b)	69	61	130	50.58
13(a)	26	24	50	19.46
13(b)	97	55	152	59.14
13(c)	114	60	174	67.70
14(a)	72	55	127	49.42
14(b)	65	43	108	42.02
15(a)	97	53	150	58.37
15(b)	132	78	210	82.49
16(a)	88	50	138	53.70
16(b)	115	64	179	69.65
16(c)	124	69	193	75.10
16(d)	147	93	240	93.39
17(a)	32	7	39	15.18
17(b)	57	50	107	41.63
18	139	100	239	93.00

candidates failed to obtain any marks and where in each case the majority did not attempt the questions. At the other extreme questions 2(b) and 12(a) were successfully attempted by the vast majority of the candidates. It can be seen that there is a hugh variation among the questions with respect to the data presented in this table with 19 having over 50 per cent omits or zero scores.

This information can enable test designers and teachers identify the reasons for the above findings. The reasons may be attributed to either of two factors. In the first instance the questions may be ambiguous or poorly worded or not related to the course. Secondly, the particular aspect of the course being tested may not have been mastered by the majority of the pupils either because it is a particularly difficult part of the course or because it had not been revised prior to the time of the test. In this instance a cluster of questions which were poorly answered 1(c), 11(b), 15, 16 and 18, all relate to the geometry section of the course and the data supports a well founded belief among teachers that this aspect of the course presents particular difficulties in teaching and that only the very able students succeed in understanding the modern approach adopted in the syllabus. Given the fact that groups of teachers experienced in teaching mathematics at this level carefully examined and edited all of the questions it is unlikely that ambiguous or poorly worded questions contributed to the poor performance on the paper. Neither is it likely that shortage of time to complete the paper was a contributing factor since those questions having the highest proportion of omits or zero scores are spread throughout rather than concentrated towards the end of the paper.

Presenting the data in this manner provides a basis for teachers to discuss the quality of the test and the performances of the candidates thus adding to the feedback potential of the examination as well as helping them to evaluate their question writing skills. A further stage in the analysis will show how the scores are distributed across the mark range for each question. This is presented in the next section.

3. Distribution of Scores

In the context of designing and evaluating test questions for an achievement examination of this type where it is expected that the candidates will be spread across the range of marks two conditions are necessary. Firstly, questions which the majority of candidates get completely right or wrong do not contribute to the overall purpose of the test since they do not discriminate between the ability levels of the candidates. However, in order to allow the candidates to settle into the examination and as a means of reducing test anxiety it is usual to include very easy questions at the beginning of the paper and to balance these with difficult questions towards the end. Overall it is expected that the average difficulty level would be around 50 per cent. Secondly, it is expected that the candidates will be spread around the mean for any given question. The degree to which this spread occurs is measured by the standard deviation which can be described as the average deviation of the scores of all the candidates from the mean. A third and more important measure will not be discussed here since it can not be so easily computed manually. This is called the discrimination index and it measures the effectiveness of a question in separating the more able (i.e. those who score highest on the test) from the less able candidates. It is obtained by correlating the mark

TABLE 3 Paper 11, Section 1 - Distribution of marks by sub-question

QUESTION	MARK ALLO-CATION	NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AT EACH MARK 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN (%)	S.D. (%)
1 a	2	61		196											1.53	0.85	76	43
1 b	2	47		210											1.63	0.78	82	39
1 c	2	159		98											0.76	0.96	37	48
2 a	2	203		54											0.42	0.81	21	41
2 b	4	23	1	7	1	225									3.57	1.18	90	30
3 a (i)	2	52		205											1.60	0.80	80	40
3 a (ii)	3	112	2	8	139										1.65	1.47	55	49
3(b)	4	83	1	26	3	144									2.48	1.82	62	46
4(a)	4	185	2	18	2	50									0.95	1.61	24	40
4(b)	5	116	2	27	14	24	74								2.20	2.19	44	44
5(a)	2	119		138											1.07	1.00	54	50
5(b)	2	80		177											1.37	0.93	69	47
5(c)	2	104		133											1.19	0.98	60	49
6(a)	4	49		10	3	195									3.15	1.58	79	40
6(b)	4	54		3	3	197									3.13	1.63	78	41
7 a (i)	2	93		164											1.28	0.96	64	48
7 a (ii)	5	163	9	46	7	8	24								1.07	1.64	21	33
7 a (iii)	5	202	1	20	9	1	24								0.75	1.57	15	31
8 a (i)	2	73		184											1.43	0.90	71	45
8 a (ii)	3	163	7	3	84										1.03	1.40	34	47
8 a (iii)	7	205	1	3	28	2	3	4	11						0.84	1.85	12	26
9	12	180	1	16	3	11	4	10	13	2	1	3	4	9	1.81	3.32	20	37
10	8	96	2	21	5	3	2		2	126					4.29	3.78	54	47

TABLE 4 Paper 11, Section 11 - Distribution of marks by sub-question

QUESTION	MARK ALLO-CATION	NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT EACH MARK 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN (%)	S.D. (%)
11 a	4	102	1	48	7	99												2.	1.78	50	46
11 b	5	143	17	9	5	83												1.93	2.29	39	46
12(a)	3	32		6	219													2.60	1.00	87	33
12(b)	7	130		8	14	5	4	28	68									2.89	3.15	41	45
13(a)	5	50	1	10	2	7	187											3.85	2.01	77	40
13(b)	4	152	5	22	6	72												1.38	1.78	35	45
13(c)	5	174	5	23	13	11	31											1.13	1.81	23	36
14(a)	8	127	2	8	24	15	11	8	2	60								2.91	3.32	36	42
14(b)	9	108	2	5	4	3	4	10	2	11	108							4.63	4.24	51	47
15(a)	12	150	1	12	3	15		13	1	4	2	6	2	48				3.45	4.82	29	40
15(b)	6	210		2		14		31										0.96	2.09	16	35
16(a)	4	138			1	118												1.85	2.00	46	50
16(b)	4	179		4	2	72												1.18	1.80	30	45
16(c)	4	193				64												1.00	1.73	25	43
16(d)	4	240	1	1		15												0.25	0.95	6	24
17(a)	7	39	11		9	8	5	23	162									5.32	2.68	76	38
17(b)	3	107	1	6	143													1.72	1.47	57	49
18	18	239		3	7		2	[illegible]			2	1					1	0.36	1.60	2	9

on the question with the total mark obtained by the candidate on the paper. A high value for a question indicates that the candidates who score highest on the question are also those who score highest on the test.[9]

With this information the data presented in Tables 3 and 4 can now be examined.

The tables show the distribution of scores across each question or part of a question. For example, in question 1(a), which had an allocation of two marks awarded on a hit or miss basis (i.e. a score of zero or two), 61 candidates obtained no marks while 196 got full marks. This resulted in an average score of 76 per cent. In terms of ease or difficulty (facility value) this was a very easy question. By way of contrast question 1(c) is almost the reverse with a mean value of 37 per cent. Overall there is a wide variation in the mean values obtained ranging from a high of 90 per cent (question 2(b)) to a low of 2 per cent (question 18).

The final column indicates how well the candidates were spread around the mean. In general fairly good distributions were obtained all round with the notable exception of question 18. Taking both measures together question 5(a) provides a good example of a well balanced question with a mean of 54 per cent and a standard deviation of 50 per cent. Questions 4(b), 10 and 14(b), which have a less restricted mark range, are also well balanced with mean values and standard deviations all close to 50 per cent. Very easy questions (2(b)) and very difficult questions (9 and 18) have also poor discrimination levels and make little contribution to the overall aim of the paper.

The picture changes somewhat when the data are

TABLE 5 Paper 11 - Distribution of marks by question

QUESTION	MARK ALLOCATION	MEAN	MEAN (%)	MODE	S.D.	S.D. (%)	MINIMUM MARK	MAXIMUM MARK
1	6	3.90	65	4	1.64	27	0	6
2	6	3.98	66	4	1.50	25	0	6
3	9	5.73	64	9	3.10	34	0	9
4	9	3.14	35	0	3.10	34	0	9
5	6	3.63	61	6	2.13	36	0	6
6	8	6.27	78	8	2.93	35	0	8
7	12	3.08	26	0	2.89	24	0	12
8	12	3.29	27	2	3.04	25	0	12
9	12	1.81	15	0	3.32	28	0	12
10	8	4.29	54	8	3.78	47	0	8
11	9	3.93	44	0	3.27	36	0	9
12	10	5.49	55	3	3.60	36	0	10
13	14	6.36	45	5	4.51	32	0	14
14	17	7.54	44	0	6.24	37	0	17
15	18	4.41	25	0	5.79	32	0	18
16	16	4.27	27	0	4.97	31	0	16
17	10	7.04	70	0	3.72	37	0	10
18	18	0.36	2	0	1.60	9	0	15

presented in a more condensed manner by grouping together the various parts of each question. These questions were designed to test particular areas of the syllabus and specific objectives. This data is presented in Table 5. Truncating the data in this manner presents a somewhat clearer if less detailed picture of the array of scores. The questions may be divided into two groups on the basis of the means scores obtained. The first group of easy questions with values ranging from 78 to 54 per cent include in decreasing order questions 6,17,2,1,3,5,12 and 10. It will be noted that all but two of these, numbers 12 and 17, are from Section 1 of the paper and thus account for the higher mean value obtained for this part. The second group have values ranging from 2 to 45 per cent and include in decreasing order of difficulty 18,9, 15,7,16,8,4,11,14 and 13. All but four of the questions are on Section 11 of the paper. This finding lends some support to the view that as one ascends the scale of objectives being tested (in this case from manipulative skills to application) the candidates encounter greater difficulty. With the exception of question 18, less variation is evident among the values obtained for the standard deviation.

Conclusion

The data presented in this paper are offered as a basis for evaluating the technical quality of essay type tests. Throughout very basic statistical measures have been applied to the data and in the context of enabling test designers, especially at school level, to evaluate the quality of their tests and, as a result the efficiency of teaching, these measures should prove sufficient as a first stage in the process. It is a matter of conjecture as to how much feedback teachers require for this task or the level of detail which they will find useful. This could usefully form an agenda for wider debate which, the interest of space, it is not proposed to enter at this stage. However, data have been presented and discussed at varying levels of detail so that choices can be made to suit specific purposes. Thus, at the first stage, summary statistical measures based on the total scores for each of the two sections and for the paper as a whole have been presented in Table 1. On the information obtained from this data more detailed analysis may be desirable in order to ascertain the contribution of the individual components of the test to overall performance. Again the level of detail is a matter of judgement and in this paper analysis has been presented at two levels (Table 5 and Tables 3 and 4). At a later stage more detailed analysis using a greater degree of statistical sophistication can be undertaken once the basic data have been collected and analysed and in many cases it will be necessary to undertake this task.

It would be misleading to give the impression that what is presented in this paper is adequate for evaluating tests, especially those used in the public examinations. Standard tests of reliability of the type undertaken by Madaus and MacNamara should be conducted.[10] At another level reference has already been made in this paper of the need to calculate more precise measures of discrimination for each question in order to evaluate its efficiency in distinguishing between levels of ability. If it is intended to forge a link between course objectives and assessment techniques by designing sub-tests to measure the attainment of specific objectives the validity of such an approach requires validation as for example through the application of correlational measures and factor analysis.[11]

Specific problems also arise in analysing examination papers in which candidates are offered a choice of questions because the total scores awarded to candidates are frequently obtained by different selections of questions. Comparisons related to the achievement of different candidates are based on the assumption that all of the questions are of equal difficulty both in terms of the content and the level of skill being tested. Rarely is this the case and extensive research by Wilmott and Hall into the effects of question choice on a range of O-level examinations in Britain has demonstrated the need to conduct specific analysis in such cases.[12] This issue is of particular significance with regard to public examinations such as the Leaving Certificate where the vast majority of subjects are examined by papers offering a choice of questions and where the grades awarded carry such weight in determining entry to third level education. Now that a decision has been made by the Department of Education to computerise examinations it is to be hoped that basic data can be collected so as to enable research studies to be conducted that will evaluate the technical quality of the examinations.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Robert L. Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), Chapter IV.

2. see R.B. Morrison, "Item Analysis and Question Validation", in H.G. Macintosh (ed.), Techniques and Problems of Assessment. (London: Edward Arnold, 1974).

3. The I.C.E. Report: Final Report of the Committee on the Form and Function of the Intermediate Certificate Examination. (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1974), p. 3.

4. J. Heywood, S. McGuinness and D. Murphy, The Public Examinations Evaluation Project: The Final Report. (Dublin: School of Education, University of Dublin, 1980).

5. See J. Heywood, Assessment of Mathematics (Twelve to Fifteen). Public Examinations Evaluation Project, Report No. 2. (Dublin: School of Education, Trinity College, 1976), for an outline of the course given to teachers.

6. See Peter J. McGuinness, "Syllabus Development and Examination Reform: A Case Study in the Assessment of Post-Primary Mathematics in Ireland", (Dublin: Ph.D. thesis, University of Dublin, 1985). Appendix II.3, for complete copies of the experimental tests.

7. Ibid., Appendix II.1 for definitions of objectives.

8. Ibid.

9. see Morrison, "Item Analysis and Question Validation".

10. see George F. Madaus and John MacNamara, Public Examinations: A Study of the Irish Leaving Certificate. Dublin: Educational Research Centre, St. Patrick's College, 1970. Chapter 2.

11. See Heywood, McGuinness and Murphy, The Public Examinations Evaluation Project: The Final Report. Chapter 12, and McGuinness, "Syllabus Development and Examination Reform", pp. 346-361.

12. Alan S. Willmott and Cedric G.W. Hall, O-level Examined: The Effect of Question Choice. (London: Macmillan Education, 1975).

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THE EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE OF ADULT STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS, GENDER AND COURSE-RELATED FACTORS

Kay MacKeogh

Adults in Higher Education

Concern with adult participation in higher education tends to revolve around a number of issues.

Firstly there is the question of equity. Many adults have never had a chance to participate in education, and the educational attainment of the majority of the adult population in Ireland is quite low, with significant numbers never having gone further than primary level education. Education is seen, therefore, as a second chance for adults.

Secondly, it is recognised that education is a lifelong process. With all the changes which are occurring in society, it is no longer enough for anyone to rely on the package of knowledge acquired in the first few years of life. We are constantly faced with the need to update our knowledge, learn new skills, even reorientate ourselves completely, as our roles change from workers to unemployed, as we become parents or community representatives. These changes will all require educational inputs.

However, adults experience many barriers to participation in higher education. These barriers include entry qualifications, finance, domestic circumstances and location. Nevertheless, significant numbers manage to overcome these barriers to gain admission to courses of higher education. The reports of the Higher

Education Authority (HEA) show that adult first-time enrolments in full-time courses in their designated institutions rose from 7,384 to 8,162 in the three years between 1981 and 1983, although forming a declining proportion of the overall intake of students, from 9.5 per cent in 1981, to 8.8 per cent in 1983 (HEA, 1982, 1983, 1984).

Dahrendorf (1975) describes adult students as people who have chosen a particularly arduous way of improving their life chances in terms of career opportunities. They are generally unhappy about their original education, dissatisfied with their occupational experience, and highly motivated in terms of learning and achieving more. They have had a period of work experience during which they have had the opportunity to formulate and clarify their occupational and educational objectives. Thus, when they decide to enrol on a course, they stand a better chance of success in achieving their objectives than younger students, who may have drifted into the course with no clear objectives.

To date, there are few published studies concerning adult students in Ireland and their performance in examinations. However, results of surveys in the UK have shown that adult students do better than younger students. For example, in Lancaster University in 1975, 12 per cent of adult students obtained degrees with first class honours, compared with 4 per cent of conventional students (ACACE, 1982), although a survey of Sheffield University students in 1981 showed that adults had a higher drop-out rate, and a more modest level of performance in final examinations than younger students (Hedderwick and Mitchell, 1985). Generally, however, there tends to be a favourable impression of the performance of adult students.

The Study

The National Council for Educational Awards is the statutory body for validating courses in higher education outside the universities. Part of its role is to monitor the assessment of students following approved courses in the institutions. These students complete examination entry forms which are lodged in the NCEA office, and their examination results are stored on broadsheets. These records form the source of the data on which this paper is based.

In Autumn 1983, 5383 students entered the first year of NCEA approved courses and in 1984, 5196 of these registered for first year examinations.[1] In all, 574 of these students were aged 21 years and over on admission to the course, a proportion of 10.7 per cent. This is a low figure compared with the enrolment of adult students in the UK, where, in 1982, adult students accounted for almost one third (30.5 per cent) of new entrants to the polytechnics, and one fifth (20.9 per cent) of all new entrants to higher education (NAB, 1983).

Almsot two thirds (64 per cent) of NCEA students were men, and one-third women (36 per cent), which means that women comprise a smaller proportion of adult students than of younger students (42 per cent of whom are women). The majority of students were aged under 35 years. Only 8.5 per cent were aged over 35 years, the oldest student being 50 years. Less than 10 per cent had no formal qualifications on admission to the course, although the NCEA allows admission to courses of adults with less than the minimum qualifications on the basis of mature years. Indeed, some of these students were already highly qualified, 7.8 per cent held Bachelor Degrees, and 17.8 per cent had some third level qualification, either a certificate or a diploma.

Over one-third (36.4 per cent) were enrolled in the Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs), a further one-fifth (22.1 per cent) were in the National Institute for Higher Education in Dublin and Thomond College of Education, and the remainder were distributed over a number of institutions, including Colleges of Technology, art colleges, seminaries and others, in all twenty-two institutions.

The 574 students form a heterogeneous group, being enrolled in courses at different levels - One Year Certificate (OYC), National Certificate (NC), National Diploma (ND), and Bachelor Degree and in a range of study areas, which have been categorised, using NCEA definitions into Business, Engineering, Humanities and Science.

Performance vis-a-vis younger students

Table 1 shows that adult students have a slightly greater drop-out rate than younger students, which concurs with findings referred to above. Drop-out refers to the proportion of those who entered for examinations in December, and who did not present for examinations in Summer. Almost one-tenth (9.5 per cent) of adult students compared with less than 6 per cent of younger students dropped out before the examination.

However, analysis of the performance of those who actually attempted the examination bears out the generally favourable impression of the performance of adult students. A significantly greater proportion of adults passed their first year examination, i.e. over three-quarters of adults (77.2 per cent) as against less than two thirds of younger students (64.4 per cent). This finding holds true, even when controlling for gender, area of studies, or level of course, as will be seen below.

TABLE 1 All students' (except Thomond CE) performance in first examination by age

PERFORMANCE	UNDER 21 YEARS	21 YEARS +
Drop-out rate of those who attempted the examination	5.6%	9.5%
% Passed	64.4%	77.2%
% Failed	35.6%	22.8%
Total attempts	4396	486

Factors affecting performance of adult students

While adults have a higher success rate than younger students, nevertheless, there were variations in success rates within the group of adult students.

It is now proposed to look at some factors which may explain these variations. These factors include entry qualifications, gender and course related factors.

Entry qualifications:

Research in the UK shows a "significant, but mediocre correlation between GCE 'A' levels and subsequent results in University courses" (Bligh and Caves, 1979). Hopper and Osbourn (1975) conclude from a review of the literature on factors affecting adult student performance that the amount and quality of secondary education is a factor in determining performance. Those who left school later than the minimum school leaving age and those who achieved some success in school examinations were more likely to obtain first class or upper second honours degrees. Table 2 offers evidence on the relationship between qualifications and performance for the NCEA group.

TABLE 2 Adult students - examination performance by level of entry qualifications

	ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS				
Result	No qualifications	Trade	2nd Level	3rd Level	Degree
% Passed	72.5%	76.9%	78.2%	67.0%	95.1%
% Failed	27.5%	23.1%	21.8%	33.0%	4.9%
Total attempts	51	26	312	88	41

Note: Figures include performance of Thomend CE students. 518 adult students attempted the examinations.

There is indeed, a relationship in that those with no previous qualifications have a lower success rate (72.5 per cent) than candidates with degree level qualifications, of whom 95.1 per cent passed. However, between these extremes, in terms of entry qualifications, the relationship between performance and entry qualificaions is less clear. 78.2 per cent of those with second level qualifications and 76.9 per cent of those with trade qualifications passed, and the lowest success rate is recorded for those with third level, sub-degree qualifications, of whom just over two-thirds passed. Therefore, those with no qualifications had a higher pass rate than those with some previous experience of third level study. In addition, those with no qualifications showed the lowest drop out rate (5.6 per cent) compared with those with third level qualifications, of whom 13.7 per cent did not attempt the examination.

The relationship between entry qualifications and performance is not affected to any great extent when controlling for area of studies. Those with no formal qualifications were less successful than those who had degree level qualifications on entry, whether the courses were in Business, Engineering, Humanities, or Science. Similarly, when controlling for course level, those with no formal qualifications had a higher success rate than those with some form of third level, sub-degree qualification.

TABLE 3 Adult students - examination by recency of study experience

	RECENCY OF STUDY EXPERIENCE			
Result	1-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	15+ yrs
% Passed	76.3%	80.4%	72.5%	80.0%
% Failed	23.7%	19.6%	27.5%	18.0%
Total attempts	211	143	40	39

Note: Figures include performance of Thomond CE students. Information on date of most recent study experience was not available for 85 adult candidates.

Table 3 shows that those with the most recent experience of formal study (i.e. within one to five years before enrolling on the course), had a lower success rate than those who had not studied within the fifteen years before the course. Some institutions require evidence of recent study as one of the criteria for admitting mature students. However, it is obvious that life experience can be as important an educational agent in preparing candidates as is formal study.

Gender:

Men and women are segregated both by course area and by course level, with women being clustered into the lower level courses and into Business and Humanities courses, as might be expected given the segregation into different subject choices at second level described by Hannan et al (1983).

Table 4 shows that adult women have a lower drop-out rate than men (5.8 per cent as against 11.8 per cent), although this pattern is reversed in relation to younger students. However, greater proportions of adult women succeeded in passing the examination than men, of whom less than three-quarters passed (74.7 per cent), compared with four-fifths (80.9 per cent) of women. However, further analysis of this pattern reveals that the difference in performance as between men and women is related more to the levels and types of courses which men and women have chosen to follow. Women are clustered into One Year Certificate and National Diploma courses in Business and Humanities areas, and these are the types of course, as will be seen, in which higher success rates are attained. Thus, the superior performance of women students is largely an effect of the types of courses followed.

TABLE 4 All students' (except Thomond CE) performance in examination by age and sex

	FEMALES		MALES	
Performance	under 21 yrs	21 yrs+	under 21 yrs	21 yrs+
Drop-out rate of those who attempted the examination	6.3%	3.8%	3.2%	11.8%
% Passed	68.8%	80.9%	61.3%	74.7%
% Failed	31.2%	19.1%	38.7%	25.3%
Total attempts	1838	194	2558	292

Course related factors:

Course area: Table 5 gives a breakdown of the performance of all students (with the exception of Thomond students), by area of studies and major age group. This breakdown shows that success rates vary between course areas and this is true for both age groups. This suggests that course choice will determine, to some extent, success rates. For example, far fewer students passed in Science (less than two-thirds (62.8 per cent) of those aged twenty-one years and over, and just over half of those aged less than twenty-one (55.7 per cent), while in Humanities 92.8 per cent of adult students, and 84.5 per cent of younger students passed. There is no clear dichotomy between technological and non-technological areas, as performance in Business Studies courses, and in Engineering courses was very similar, especially among adult students, of whom 71.8 per cent passed Business and 72.7 per cent passed Engineering courses respectively.

TABLE 5 All students' (except Thomond CE) performance in examination by age and area of studies

Result	BUSINESS under 21yrs	BUSINESS 21yrs+	ENGINEERING under 21yrs	ENGINEERING 21yrs+	HUMANITIES under 21yrs	HUMANITIES 21yrs+	SCIENCE under 21yrs	SCIENCE 21yrs+
Drop-out rate of those who attempted the examination	4.3%	13.3%	6.6%	10.2%	8.2%	4.1%	4.9%	4.4%
% Passed	68.1%	71.8%	60.9%	72.7%	84.5%	92.8%	55.7%	62.8%
% Failed	31.9%	28.2%	39.1%	27.3%	15.5%	7.2%	44.3%	37.2%
Total attempts	1365	216	1453	88	484	139	1094	43

Variation between degree results across course areas has been noted in UK institutions by Bourner and Bourner (1985). They found, however, that engineering and technical subjects produced the highest results, in terms of honours degrees, while social and aministrative and business courses had the smallest proportion of good degrees - reversal of the pattern noted here. However, these authors were comparing final results, rather than first examination results.

Course level:

The performance of all first year students broken down by level of course and major age group is shown in Table 6. Once more the pattern of greater proportions of adult students passing the examination holds true. However, there are significant variations in pass rates between different course levels, with higher pass rates at One Year Certificate level - 85.7 per cent of these candidates passed - and lower success rates for the higher level courses - less than two-thirds (54.9 per cent) of Degree candidates passed. Nevertheless, the highest success rate is achieved by the second highest award level, the National Diploma (96.4 per cent of National Diploma students passed). However, this is partly explained by the fact that of the National Diploma candidates, two-thirds are following Humanities courses, the area in which the highest success rates have been noted.

TABLE 6 All students' (except Thomond CE) performance in examination by age and level of course

	1 YEAR CERT		CERTIFICATE		DIPLOMA		DEGREE	
Result	under 21yrs	21yrs+	under 21yrs	21yrs+	under 21yrs	21yrs+	under 21yrs	21yrs+
Drop-out rate of those who attempted the examination	11.2%	5.4%	5.1%	8.3%	1.2%	5.9%	6.3%	13.4%
% Passed	83.2%	85.7%	63.1%	75.3%	72.7%	96.4%	58.0%	64.9%
% Failed	16.8%	14.3%	36.9%	24.7%	27.3%	3.6%	42.0%	35.1%
Total attempts	358	35	3257	166	172	111	609	174

Mode of study:

Finally, the role of mode of study in effecting performance was examined, and this proved to be an important explanatory factor. Full-time students face a less pressurised learning situation than others. There is greater potential for discussion and cross-fertilization of ideas, there is the existence of group support, and all of these would seem more likely to contribute to the success of full-time candidates as compared with the isolation of the correspondence student, and the stress for part-time students arising from the struggle to co-ordinate the demands of work, home, and study. The results of this group of students clearly support this interpretation (Table 7), as full-time students have a higher pass rate than correspondence students. Over four-fifths (82.1 per cent) of full-time students passed the examination, compared with less than three-quarters (71.3 per cent) of part-time students and just over two-thirds (67.5 per cent) of correspondence students. Part-time and distance learning formats are often proffered as solutions to problems of access to education for adults. However, it is apparent from these figures that mode of study has implications for success in examination. Non-full-time students face problems not encountered by full-time students, and these can only be tackled through increased support in the form, perhaps, of both tutorial and counselling backup.

TABLE 7 Adult students - examination by mode of study

	MODE OF STUDY		
Result	Full-time	Part-time	Correspondence
% Passed	82.1%	71.3%	67.5%
% Failed	17.9%	28.7%	32.5%
Total attempts	290	188	40

Note: Figures include performance of Thomond CE students

Drop-out

The above discussion has centred around those who presented at examinations. An important question remains as to who were the candidates who did not appear at the examinations. There is the possibility that there has been an element of self selection whereby those who felt that they might not succeed in the examinations may have withdrawn.

The issue of drop-out of adults from education has been the subject of considerable investigation. Hibbert (1978) concludes from his research that, on average, drop-outs tend to be younger, have fewer educational qualifications, lower job status, and lower income than the average for course members. Table 8 is a composite profile of the characteristics of those who dropped out before their examinations.

Course related factors appear to be instrumental in explaining variations in drop-out. Business and Engineering courses have significantly higher drop-out rates (13.3 per cent and 10.2 per cent respectively), compared with far smaller proportions in Humanities and Science courses (4.1 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively). There is a tendency for higher level courses to experience greater drop-out rates. 13.4 per cent of degree level candidates dropped out, compared with just over 5 per cent of One Year Certificate students.

The most significant indicator of drop-out appears to be mode of study, which as has been seen, is also significent in determining the level of performance in examinations. Only 6.8 per cent of full-time students and 8.7 per cent of part-time students drop out, whereas 29.8 per cent of correspondence students fail to continue their studies, a possible explanation being that full-time students have made a greater commitment to their studies, or alternatively, non full-time and particularly part-time students have found it impossible to combine work and study.

TABLE 8 Drop-out among adult students - selected characteristics

AGE	21-25yrs	26-30yrs	31-35yrs	36-40yrs	40yrs+
Drop-out rate	10.7%	9.0%	13.6%	-	9.1%
SEX		FEMALE		MALE	
Drop-out rate		5.8%		12.0%	
MARITAL STATUS		MARRIED		SINGLE	
Drop-out rate		10.8%		9.6%	
ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	NONE	TRADE	2nd LEVEL	3rd LEVEL	DEGREE
Drop-out rate	5.6%	10.3%	9.3%	13.7%	8.9%
AREA OF STUDIES	BUSINESS	ENGINEERING		HUMANITIES	SCIENCE
Drop-out rate	13.3%	10.2%		4.1%	4.9%
LEVEL OF STUDIES	1yr CERT	CERTIFICATE		DIPLOMA	DEGREE
Drop-out rate	5.4%	8.3%		5.9%	13.4%
MODE OF STUDY		FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	CORRESPONDENCE	
Drop-out rate		6.8%	8.7%	29.8%	

Note: Figures on drop-outs include Thomond Students

Hibbert (1978) concludes his review of drop-out among adult students by questioning the need for exaggerated concern. It is inevitable that some students will not complete the course for a number of reasons which cannot be catered for by the format of the course. Problems and changes in family, health, finance, and employment circumstances may dictate that students leave the course. Leaving the course does not necessarily infer a total loss, although there are costs involved, for the state, the institution, and perhaps the individual, associated with non-completion. Some students leave, having achieved their objectives.

Others may return at some later state to continue their studies.

Implications

What are the implications of these findings? This paper has presented details of the cohort of adults who entered the first year of NCEA approved courses in 1983, and has borne out some of the findings of research in other countries. It would appear that once adults have managed to overcome the barriers to admission to higher education, they show that they are certainly more capable of passing the course than their younger, more conventionally qualified fellow students. Nevertheless, the findings have thrown up a number of issues which would need to be explored further and in greater depth.

Firstly the evidence in relation to entry qualifications shows that the majority of adult students have some form of qualification before entry to their course and some are very highly qualified already. Given that the courses examined represent the initial stage of entry to higher education, one might query the small proportion of previously unqualified students involved, particularly when adult education has been presented as a second chance for adults whom the system has previously failed. While the NCEA is favourably disposed to the admission of adults on the basis of mature years, there is no indication that this procedure is widely applied. Evans (1984) notes a similar phenomenon in relation to the institutions associated with the Council for National Academic Awards in the UK.

The Advisory Council for Continuing Education in the UK, referring to the role of entry qualifications in adult education commented:

> Entry requirements normally used to assess young people's academic suitability are not necessarily the best indicators of adults' suitability. They take no account of the skills, knowledge and experience gained by adults outside the world of education; they may also take account of adults' potential and determination to succeed (ACACE, 1982)

This paper has shown that adults with no previous qualifications do better than those with some third level qualifications. This is not to deny that lack of formal qualifications may be a barrier to successful participation in some higher education courses which require specific levels of competence in literacy or numeracy. In these cases,however, institutions might consider ways of opening up access to higher level qualifications, perhaps by way of establishing foundation type courses. Such courses have proved successful in the UK. Hedderwick and Mitchell (1985) report that the access course for mature students at the Uiversity of Sheffield has effected a reduction in drop-out rate and failure among adults who entered the university with this qualification.

Finally, the question of alternative modes and education formats should be carefully considered in the light of the findings in relation to the relationship between mode of study and performance. Full-time students had the lowest drop-out rate and the highest success rate in exminations. Part-time students, and particularly correspondence students had far lower success rates and higher drop-out rates. These findings may be interpreted in a number of ways. Cross has described a process whereby "when colleges, under the growing pressure to find new student markets, recruit adults, the entrants find thmselves constrained to fit the procrustean bed of programmes designed for 18-20 year old full-time students" (Cross, 1977).

The extension of full-time courses for adults, which could be facilitated by the implementation in Ireland of the ILO convention on Paid Educational Leave might be seen as a possible sulution to the problem, but in the present financial circumstances seems to be out of the question. Nor would the extension of full-time courses in itself necessarily solve the problems of the adult learner returning to study. Full-time, part-time and distance education programmes must be designed with the characteristics and particular experiences, and personal and domestic circumstances of adult learners in mind.

Notes

1. Because of the different time of examination, data in relation to Thomond students are not used when comparing variations between adult and younger students. Instead, they are used only when comparing variations among adult students.

Note: Any views expressed in this paper are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the NCEA.

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